X and Y

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

I.

THE PILGRIM AND THE SHRINE. 4th Edition, 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

"One of the wisest and most charming of books."—*Westminster Review.*

II.

HIGHER LAW. A ROMANCE. 12mo, cloth, $1.75.

"There is no novel, in short, which can be compared to it for its width of view, its cultivation, its poetry, and its deep human interest, . . . except 'Romola.' "—*Westminster Review.*

"Its careful study of character, and the ingenuity and independence of its speculations, will commend it to the admiration even of those who differ from its conclusions most gravely."—*British Quarterly Review.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, Publishers, New York.

BY AND BY:

An Historical Romance

OF

THE FUTURE.

BY

EDWARD MAITLAND,

AUTHOR OF

"THE PILGRIM AND THE SHRINE," "HIGHER LAW," ETC.

"In those days shall——"
Ancient Prophecy.

NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,
FOURTH AVENUE AND TWENTY-THIRD STREET.
LONDON: RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON.
1873.

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PREFACE.

The Pilgrim and the Shrine and *Higher Law* present, respectively, the evolution of religion and morals out of the contact of the external world with the human consciousness, as well as that of the faculties themselves out of the lower instincts. Similarly, *By and By* presents a state of society in which the intuitions are promoted to their proper supremacy over tradition and convention. In endeavoring to exhibit the capacity of Nature to produce, unaided, and provided only that its best be given fair play, the highest results in character, and conduct, and faith, the purpose of the entire series shows itself to be no other than the rehabilitation of nature; a purpose supremely religious, inasmuch as to rehabilitate nature is to rehabilitate the Author of nature,—the failure of the work involving that of the maker.

To find a society resting solely on the intelligence and moral sense of its members, as developed by rational education, it was necessary to go to a yet far distant future. *By and By*, then, is an attempt to depict the condition of the world at a time when our own country, at least, shall have made such advance in the solution of the problems which harass the present, and shall be so far relieved of all disabling artifices, social, political,

and religious, that individuals will be able, without penalty or reproach, to fashion their lives according to their own preferences, the sole external limitation being that imposed by the law of equal liberty for all.

To depict such a society without falling into the extravagances of Utopianism, certain conditions must be observed, the main one of which is that human nature be regarded as a "constant quantity." Whatever the progress made in knowledge and the art of living, all differences will be of degree, not of kind. Wherefore, unless the period taken be very much in advance of that contemplated in *By and By*, and altogether unthinkable by us, the conditions of existence will still necessitate the production of types varying widely in character and development, and therefore of lives consisting of efforts resulting more or less in alternating failure and success. No matter how severely scientific the training, there will still be a religious side to man's nature, a side through which the intuitions will seek towards their source, and deem it to be found in the eternal consciousness, inherent in the universe of being, that for them underlies all phenomena.

It must be expected that, as in the past, so in the future, there will be men endowed with a genius for that righteousness which recognizes a relation to the whole as well as to the part, and as liable under the influence of enthusiasm to transcend the bounds of strict sanity, and in their ecstacy to confound their spiritual imaginings with their physical perceptions,—as ever were founders of religions of old.

With regard to woman, it must be expected that no training will prevent the emotional from still predominating in her constitution, and retaining her in a position in respect to man relatively the same that she has ever held. It must be ex-

pected, too, that the first choice of the ideal man of the future, as just described, will be the woman who most nearly for him represents nature, genuine and unsophisticated; that though he will find such nature very winning and sweet, he will also find it very perverse and wayward, and hard to arouse to a sense of the ideal; but because it is true and genuine, and loves its best, he will be tender and enduring to the end, no matter at what cost to himself. It must be expected that the conflict between soul and sense will still be illustrated in the facts and relations of life; that to much love much more will be forgiven than now, when the compulsion is that of the sentiments and not of law; and that while the selfishness, insincerity, and uncharity which characterize the merely conventional, will be the sole unpardonable sins, and a moral jar be held as justifying divorce, even these will be "vanishing qualities" under the gradual elimination from society of the conditions which favor their development.

It may be further surmised of such a character as has been indicated, that, while differing from his prototypes of the past in being rich instead of poor, educated instead of untaught, married instead of single (for how else can he afford a complete example of the ideal life to others?), his enthusiasm expending itself on the practical, and his whole life illustrating the gospel, that man is to be redeemed by works, inasmuch as he has it in his power to amend the conditions of his own existence, he will not altogether escape the fate that has ever befallen those who have been enthusiasts for humanity, and that the sufferings which make perfect will not be wanting to him.

While our Romance of the Future thus becomes in a measure transformed into an allegory, and its characters present

themselves under a typical aspect, it may surely be hoped that, whatever the view taken of details, the impression produced by the whole will be one of hopefulness as to the possibilities of humanity; and that it is not among what has been termed the "literature of despair," that *By and By* and its companion books can fairly be catalogued.

London, *July*, 1873.

BY AND BY.

CHAPTER I.

Descending slowly, surely, helplessly, towards earth; the stars growing dimmer, until their light is utterly extinguished by the mists which, clammy, dense, and oh! so cold, are wrapping us round as in a death-shroud. The silence absolute; and nothing to indicate the nature of the place that is to receive us on quitting our aërial course. Is it land? Is it sea? Mountain or plain? A wilderness of snow, or a field of ice?

"Imagine a group of conscious souls in the interval between two existences, on the point of being ushered into a state of Being absolutely new and untried, and devoid of the confidence which comes only of experience,—and you may imagine the depth of those sentiments of awe and mystery which possessed myself and my comrades on that night, some five and forty years ago—night so dread in itself, yet but for which, and its relation to us, this our latter age would never have been illumined by the bright, true, pure spirit of him concerning whom I have undertaken to tell."

The speaker was old Bertie Greathead. The place was the common hall of *the Triangle*. The audience consisted of the members, young and old, of that famous Club, besides some other persons. The occasion was the first anniversary of the death of one of the members, towards whose memoirs, written by myself, Lawrence Wilmer, Bertie's narrative was a contribution.

Having uttered the above sentences with tearful eyes and

faltering voice, Bertie paused and gazed upon his hearers. The evident sympathy he found in their looks reassured him, and, with stronger accents, he began his formal relation.

"Members of *the Triangle*, and other friends here assembled; —The narrative which I have undertaken to contribute towards a connected history of the loved friend we have lost, claims to be but a simple statement of facts. As most of you know, the literary function is not mine. Although for many years a leader and teacher of youth, my business has been aërographical and locomotive, not mental or scholastic. In short, I am simply a professor of aërial navigation. It was on one occasion, when returning from an excursion taken partly for the sake of visiting foreign regions, partly for the purpose of inculcating my art, that the series of uncommon incidents occurred without which there would have been no occasion for me to appear now before you.

"The time is forty-five years ago last Christmas. Of the youths entrusted to my charge for an aërial trip, to two only shall I have occasion to refer, namely, Mr. Wilmer, the father—long since dead—of our dear Lawrence here, and our distinguished friend, Charles Avenil, who, being unavoidably absent this evening, is represented by his nephew and other relatives. It is of a third, who joined our party on its route, and of the way in which he joined it, that I have more particularly to tell you.

"We were bound homewards from a sojourn in the volcanic isles of the North Pole, a district which had then recently been made available for settlement, through the perfection to which the science of aërial navigation and universal telegraphy had been brought. Surrounded at a distance by a rarely passable barrier of ice, these islands, nevertheless, enjoy a fair climate for a considerable portion of the year, owing in part to the presence of oceanic currents from the Equator, and in part to the prevalence of volcanic fires at a short distance beneath the soil.

"These facts are, doubtless, familiar to most persons present. But, as I desire to be fully comprehended by all, even the

youngest, of my hearers, I must request indulgence if, for the sake of some, I go more fully into detail than is requisite for others. The garrulity and tediousness naturally appertaining to seventy-five years of age, I shall endeavor to suppress.

"Desiring to avoid the crowd of summer tourists, and to study without distraction the meteorological and magnetic phenomena presented by the country under the total deprivation of sunlight; as well as to examine at leisure the manners and traditions of the tribes whose discovery by the first aërial polar expedition made the great sensation of a comparatively recent generation, owing to the enormous and undoubted antiquity of their records, which showed that, though isolated from the rest of mankind for tens of thousands of years, they yet possessed the same characteristics of form, manners, and religious symbolism to which we had been wont to ascribe a far later origin —for these reasons, I say, we had extended our sojourn nearly to mid-winter, intending to return to England in time to spend the Festival of the Year with our friends at home.

"The winter solstice was just commencing when we embarked on our return journey at the North Polar Aërial Transit Station, in the vehicle in which we had made the outward voyage, my own favorite aëromotive, a machine whose stanchness had been proved in many a long and stormy flight over all parts of the earth. How it came to fail me on this occasion is still a matter of doubt. It was probably through the action of a sudden blast of intensely cold air upon the cylinder of the decomposer (for it was a magnetic-atmospheric propeller). However, in mid-air, and mid-way upon our voyage, we were so crippled as to have no choice but to descend, and proceed either by land or sea, according to the nature of the element upon which we might alight, for the car was adapted to either purpose.

"By aid of our parachute apparatus, which, in spite of the intense cold, worked admirably, we were, in a very few minutes after the accident, slowly and steadily descending towards the earth. The only question of any importance was as to where precisely we should find ourselves on alighting. In the event

of further progress being impracticable, and the country being devoid of supplies, we still had sufficient to keep us until we could telegraph for, and receive aid.

"It is true that in those days the network of wires which now cover both sea and land, like the lines of latitude and longitude in the maps devised by our ingenious ancestors, was but scantily diffused over the Arctic regions. But even then there were points for communication, though comparatively few and far between; and we did not doubt but that, alight where we might, we should be able, by traveling no very great distance, either by land or sea, to summons from the Central Home Depôt an aëromotive to our relief.

"And here I must be pardoned a digression if, for the sake of these little ones, I stop a moment to call their attention to the blessings which civilization has conferred upon the world in our days. Once upon a time, and for myriads of ages, it was a chief business of one generation of men to destroy the improvements made by another. Amid the universal wreck and havoc of those Ages of War, such a scheme as our universal network of telegraph-wires would have been impossible, if only for its costliness. It is true that a war involving equal, or even greater, outlay, would have been undertaken with readiness and lightness of heart, so that it was not the cost alone that interfered, but the fact that humanity was still in its destructive stage, and therefore disinclined to make the same effort on behalf of construction. It is because we have got rid of the waste of war, and vast armaments for national offence and defence, and no longer absorb labor in useless works, or withdraw it from working altogether, that we have been able to construct and maintain works of such vast magnitude and utility as the Floating Oceanic Telegraph System, and the corresponding Terrestrial Service.

"Our precise position was unknown to us. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been of little consequence. Such was the speed of my aëromotive—scarcely surpassed even by later inventions—that she must have been very far out of her course to be unable to recover it in a few hours. The voyage to

the Pole is simple enough. Travelers have but to steer northward until the needle points vertically downwards, and then to look about for a spot on which to alight. Twenty-four hours due north, at an average speed of a hundred miles an hour, is bound to bring them in sight of the volcanic fires which, rising from the summits of the Polar Mountains, make such convenient beacons for aëronauts. The time, however, varies somewhat, owing to the action of the polar atmospheric currents, which frequently divert the traveler from his direct course, and compel him to approach the Pole in a spiral direction.

"Similarly, in returning from the Pole, the spiral direction is taken at the start, as it happened in our case; and it was the impossibility of ascertaining the velocity of these currents that preventing us from calculating our position. In any other region we should have remained aloft until daylight, and then leisurely selected a spot whereon to descend. But as the accident to our machinery occurred in the middle of an arctic winter, when the night is several months in duration, it was impossible to remain floating about waiting for daylight.

"Well, when it was indicated by the barometer that we must be in the lower stratum of air, and therefore very close to the earth's surface, we adjusted our electric-reflector lamp so as to project its brilliant column of light directly downwards. All that we discovered, however, was the fact that on all sides, as far as we could see, the earth was covered by a mist so dense as to conceal entirely from our view the spot we were approaching. We were therefore unable to determine whether it was for contact with a solid or a fluid element that we ought to be prepared.

"Descending very slowly and cautiously; checking our downward movement by working the spiral wings of our machine with our hands, and watching intently for any sight or sound that might indicate our whereabouts, we were disposed to be somewhat appalled by the intense stillness that prevailed. Of course, high up, the stillness is equally intense, save only when broken by the noise of the propelling machinery, and the rushing by of the air. But there, close to the earth, its character-

istics seemed different. I have no doubt my young friend, Lawrence, or at least Mr. Avenil, junior, has heard his relation speak of the impression it made upon us——"

"I remember," said Avenil, "my uncle saying that Wilmer's father, who was then about fifteen years old, asked if it were possible that they had missed the earth and got foul of the dark side of the moon, or some asteroid in which light and life are extinct; and that as he was speaking you were all knocked off your feet as if by some invisible vindicator of the honor of the heavenly body in question."

"True, he was of a poetical temperament, like his son after him. But the suggestion turned out to be more appropriate than at first appeared likely. It was neither earth nor ocean that was about to receive us. Our first intimation that we were nearing anything, came in the form of a blow from some unseen body. Recoiling a little, we continued our slow descent, until presently we received another concussion; a slighter one, for we rebounded but a very little way from the substance which had given it. The next sensation was that of sliding down a nearly perpendicular slope. It was clear that we were alighting upon the side of a steep mountain; and supposing that we were in about the eightieth degree of latitude, I hoped to find ourselves either on the north coast of Greenland, or in Spitzbergen, or on some other land that borders on the Arctic circle, and therefore within reach of a telegraph point, and consequently of succor: for points had recently been placed upon all the principal summits for the convenience of aërial voyagers. That is, upon the principal permanent summits; for of course icebergs were not taken into account; and it was upon a gigantic iceberg that, on finally settling down, we found ourselves safely deposited."

CHAPTER II.

THE first thing to be investigated was the practicability of repairing our crippled machinery, with a view to continuing our voyage. A little examination showed that this was out of the question. The next point was whether we could reach the edge of the floe, and launch the car upon the open sea. Before this could be done, it was necessary that the mist should clear off, for that was so dense as utterly to defy the rays of our reflector. A third point to be determined was that of the berg's mobility, that is, whether it was upon a motionless continent, or a drifting island that we had alighted.

"In the meantime, it was necessary to take precautions against the cold. By the aid of our reflector, we ascertained that we had slidden into a sort of wedge-shaped hollow, or crater, with sides vertical or overhanging, rising some fifteen or twenty feet above us all round, except on the side nearly facing the declivity of the berg, where there was an opening some yards in width. The bottom of our crater was tolerably smooth and level, and so, taking all things into consideration, we decided that we could do no better than remain there for the present. And in a little while after touching ground, or rather ice, we were snugly enseonced in the angle of the hollow, between solid encircling walls of green ice, which, inclining over head, made an admirable shelter, especially when supplemented by the floaters of the aëromotive, which we detached for the purpose. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say we were comfortably settled, both as regards our mental and our physical condition, for those with me had too much confidence in me, and I had too much confidence in the resources still left to us by science, to think of despairing of our ultimate safety.

"Let me enumerate those resources. It was still mid-winter, so that the berg would not melt or turn over. We had provisions that might last us a couple of weeks or more, and we might add to our store by catching some seals or bears. Our ice-house

was so warm that we could save all our combustibles for the purpose of illumination. It is true there was not much chance at that season of a traveller passing over our heads, or of his perceiving our signals of distress, if there were one. But there was a chance, and it was my main hope, though its success depended upon the thickness of the ice, and upon our finding an aperture through which we could get at the water. This, again, however, would be of little use, unless our resting-place were in motion, for the chance consisted in our being able to drop a grappling line through into the sea, and hooking up a wire by which we could at once communicate with home, and summon relief. The floating telegraphs have all been constructed with this view; so that persons at sea are always within a few miles of some link in the magnetic network. We knew that it was not impossible that even at that moment, while upon the top of the ice-floe, its under side might be in contact with one of these wires, and that it was only necessary to reach it in order to obtain aid in a few hours.

"But to this desirable end two things were almost certainly necessary. We must get at the water in order to sink our line; and we must be in motion in order to catch the wire. This once caught, any one of the lads of my party could communicate with home by means of his magnetic pocket-speaker, as readily as tell the time by his watch.

"It is a strangely uncomfortable sensation, that of being in the dark, and without the slightest notion of the kind of place one is in. Beside the discomfort we experienced on this account, there was the necessity of learning something about our immediate surroundings, if we were to escape by leaving them. So we spent much time in endeavoring to grope around our cave. Whoever undertook the office of explorer, was always made fast by a cord to keep him from slipping away or otherwise being lost. We made several of these attempts without any satisfactory result, for the ice sloped away so steeply on all sides when we had got just outside the cave, that it was with difficulty we could draw the explorer back to us. It seemed precisely as if we were in the crater of a volcano, with a break in the wall on

one side. The thickness of the fog continued to neutralize all attempts to guage the darkness with the reflector.

"My last attempt in this direction was prompted by a surmise of so uncomfortable a nature, that I was anxious to keep it to myself. I had, for reasons obvious to the scientific mind, erected the aëromotive's pendulum in the centre of our nook, so as to be always readily observable, and I had given the lads strict injunctions to communicate to me its slightest movement. For the first day or two it was motionless. Then occasional tremors were observed to be passing through it. This made me watch anxiously for the next development. The fog was our chief enemy in the present. A steady oscillation of the pendulum would indicate a rolling motion in the ice, that could only proceed from a storm, which though at first distant, would in all probability soon arrive and disperse the fog. The larger and more compact the ice-field, the smaller would be the arc described by the pendulum. This was obvious. It ought to have been equally obvious that the higher we were above the sea-level, the larger that arc would be. But I confess that this had not occurred to me at the time of which I am now speaking. The situation was far from being a familiar one. Mountains don't rock or roll.

"Well, it was the period we treated as night, and for which we turned in to sleep, when I was watching the movements of the pendulum with a perplexity that increased as they increased and varied. I thought every one except myself was asleep. Suddenly, to my astonishment and alarm, the pendulum, instead of going backwards and forwards over the diameter of the circle inscribed below it, changed its direction, and described a circular movement, passing completely round over the circumference of the indicating circle.

"'It's no use, Master Bertie,' said a voice which at first startled me by its unexpectedness, but which I recognized as that of the young Avenil, who, instead of sleeping, had been quietly exercising his precociously scientific faculties in watching the pendulum, and drawing his own inferences. 'It's no use your trying to keep things to yourself, for fear of frightening us. Look at this rod.'

"Resting one end of a short bar upon the floor, he made the other end slowly describe a circle in the air.

"'This is where we are,' he said, pointing to the upper end of the bar. 'It's just as well we didn't lower any of the boys further down when we were prospecting the outside of our hollow tree. I shall go to sleep now. Good-night.'

"He had made the discovery first, a discovery which caused me to gasp with apprehension. At that moment a rushing sound as of wind attracted my attention. I went to the aperture of the cave and looked out. The sight confirmed my worst fears. The fog was entirely gone. Overhead shone the stars out of a sky intensely crystalline and black, where the streamers of an Aurora darted their pale colors athwart it. Towering before me was the steep slope of the loftiest portion of the berg, adown the side of which we had slidden; and below me and on all sides were depths apparently unfathomable. To make sure before communicating my discovery, I returned into the cave and brought out the reflector. Turning on the light to its fullest extent, and directing the rays downwards, the whole truth was revealed. It was upon no level ice-field that we had alighted, nor even at the foot of an ice precipice, but on the top of one of the highest peaks of a lofty berg, whence descent seemed to be impossible. And not only was the berg in motion, but, as the pendulum indicated, it was rolling as if approaching the period when through the action of a warm sea-current upon its immersed portion, it was liable to turn completely over.

"However, as the danger of such a catastrophe did not appear to be imminent, the discovery I had made still afforded room for hope. We were in motion. That was a valuable fact. The area of ice was limited, so that the water could not be very far from the base of our eminence. This too was important. The rolling proved us to be detached from any field. Even though it should be impossible to descend from the peak, we might be able to reach the sea with a grappling line, and telegraph home for relief. If we succeeded in doing this, the only thing that then remained for us to do, would be to keep our position so brightly illuminated, that the Relief would be able to

see us and take us off; for not knowing where we were, we could not tell them where to look for us.

"These things passed through my mind as I stood by the entrance to the cave. Returning within, I was accosted by Avenil, who said,

"'I have been making some calculations in my head, and am very much inclined to think we must be on the top of a pretty high old berg. What have you seen? Is the fog gone yet?'

"Telling him to wrap his furs closely around him (we all had dresses of fur, double ones with fur on both sides), I took him outside and showed him our position.

"'I suppose,' he said, 'that these things take to rocking and rolling a long time before they can tumble over, so that we need not trouble ourselves about that.'

"'Could we not,' he then asked, 'find out whether it is ice or water down below, by firing some shots down?'

"'Certainly,' I said, 'if we had been provided with a gun.'

"'I have my piece with me,' he replied, 'and some percussion bullets left from the stock I brought out with me.'

"I begged him to get them out at once, as if the fog came on again they would be of no use.

"The gun was soon ready, and the whole party came and stood on the ledge to watch the experiment.

The first shot was directed against the face of the berg opposite to us, in order that we might learn the effect of the concussion on what we knew to be solid ice, before discharging one into the unknown void below. The bullet struck and exploded, tearing away large splinters and hurling them into the air, whence they fell into the abyss. We then fired several shots downwards at various angles, some to a distance of probably two or three hundred yards (for it was but a pocket-piece, and scarcely able to carry further). They all exploded, as if against a hard substance, making a noise that amid those icy silences seemed terrific. We then bethought us of lighting up the most distant points the gun would reach, by discharging some small fire-balls; and I returned into the cave to prepare

them from a combination of Avenil's explosives, and some of the reflector's magnesium. They answered their purpose admirably, but proved still more conclusively that no open water was accessible to us, and therefore no room for drifting, except with a vast mass, and probably therefore no telegraph wire accessible, or means of communicating with home, and no prospect of relief.

"The experiments which forced this melancholy conclusion upon me being over, it was with a heavy heart that I led the way back into the cave, and seated myself in silence beside the pendulum.

"Avenil, who was the oldest of the lads, placed himself beside me, and after a short silence, remarked—

"'It is lucky that I am one of the lightest, as well as in other ways the fittest, of the party for the job. Don't you think, Bertie, we had better set to work at once?'

"'It seems the only hope,' I answered; 'but I cannot bear the thought either of letting one go alone or of leaving any behind, and in such a place as this.'

"I said this because I thought that he meant that with but one or two persons in it, the aëromotive could be worked by hand power, and that he would venture forth in it to seek aid.

"'No, no, I don't mean that,' he exclaimed, when I had explained my thought. 'Why, Bertie, old man, the idea of missing your Christmas dinner is affecting your brain! Did you not notice that the wind has set in strongly from the south, so that there would be no chance of working against it by hand? I meant that I would be the first to descend the berg by a rope and explore the lower part of the floe more closely: and if I could find a likely spot, commence boring or blasting a hole to let our grappling hook through. I suppose we have line enough to scale any possible berg?'

"I reminded him that the plan would only answer upon a thin ice-field, whereas we had two-thirds of our mass below the surface of the water; but he said that there might be thin ice or even crevices close by, and that at any rate it must have an

end or an edge somewhere, and that whatever the risk it was necessary for some one to run it, and who better than he?

"I declared that if anyone made the attempt it should be myself, and that I would set about it to-morrow; but he exclaimed—

"To-morrow! why, dear Bertie, how forgetful you have become—you who are famous for always thinking of everything, and everybody, except yourself. It is all one long day, or rather night, here.'

"'The thought of you all, and of your parents,' I said, 'will come over me at times, and is almost more than I can bear. But call it what you will, day or night, the next twelve hours will see the turn of the sun. Would that we might be safe here until his light travels so far north. But we have not food for so long a time, or fuel to maintain the heat for converting the ice into water for drinking, even if the berg were safe from overturning. But what are the lads firing again for?' I asked, for I thought I heard a fresh discharge.

"As I spoke, young Wilmer rushed into the cave, crying out that our shots had been taken for signals, and were being answered from a balloon or something that seemed to be coming towards us.

"Scarcely crediting my senses, I hastened out, and was just in time to hear another discharge, apparently to the south, and but a short distance off. Gazing intently in that direction, we presently discovered a light attached to what appeared to be a large old-fashioned balloon coming along with the wind.

"'More victims,' I muttered to myself, for I knew that a machine of that build could never control its course in anything stronger than a light wind. Our own machine was on the spiral fan system, and, with sufficient motive power, could screw its way right into any wind. This was of the old gaseous type; and though it was not unusual for travelers to take a short cut over the Pole from one hemisphere to the other, this was not the vehicle to do it in.

"Observing that the stranger was keeping a direct course for us, I told the boys to get out the gun again, and a fresh supply

of magnesium, adding that we would let the strangers see as well as hear us, and that it would be curious indeed if we were to have company there.

"'A Christmas party! a Christmas party on an iceberg!' they shouted.

"'And perhaps,' added Avenil, 'they will be able to take us off.'

"When they were quiet, I said to them—

"'My boys, that balloon is in distress. She is either steered by a novice, or by one too weak to keep her steady. I wish the wind would lull; she will sweep past us to a certainty. Cease firing, and keep the reflector turned on her. We shall be able to speak her presently.'

"It was a moment of intense anxiety as she neared us. It was clear that she was desirous of coming to anchor, for her grapples were all out hanging far below her, so far that I wondered they did not catch in the water, and either retard her progress or drag her down. As it was, she had a strange jerky motion, which at first I was at a loss to account for. Studying her carefully through my glass, I discovered the cause. She was skimming the ice; and the jerks were caused by the grapples catching the edges of the hummocks and then slipping off and catching again. She was on a lower level than ourselves.

"I had scarcely made this observation when we all cried—

"'Ah!'

"For at that moment she made a sudden leap upward as if lightened of a considerable load, and indeed, I thought I saw a large package or something drop from her. A few moments more and she rushed upon our berg, her lines striking against the walls of our cavern, and she herself striking against the side of the peak far above us, exactly as we had done, only with much greater violence, and from another direction.

"Without pausing a moment to see what she would do next, but shouting at the top of my voice to encourage the inmates,—if living inmate she still had, for I had begun to doubt it, so strange had been all her ways since the last signal had been

discharged,—I and the lads seized hold of the grappling lines and carried them into the cave, where we made them fast by wedging them into a great crevice in the ice. Fortunately the arrest of the balloon against the berg had left them slack, or they would have been torn away from our grasp. Hastening out again, we perceived her clinging to the precipice above us, as if rubbing herself uneasily against its sloping front. I then hailed her in several different languages successively, the last time being in Arabic, for the make of the grapples made me take her for an Oriental of some kind. This time I was rewarded by hearing a faint voice speaking in the same tongue, and querulously complaining of something or other.

"So we set to work to haul her in to us. She came more easily than we expected, for she had lost much of her buoyancy with the blow of the contact—a contact partly caused, as on reflection seemed probable, both in her case and in our own, by the attraction of the gigantic iceberg."

CHAPTER III.

"While gently drawing the stranger towards us, I did my best to encourage the inmates by addressing to them kindly phrases in the same tongue; and, as I must confess, I felt a little ruffled at not getting a single word in response. At length the car, which was elaborately constructed of the finest basket-work and silk, was safely lodged within our crater, its huge floaters, still partially distended with gas, occupying a great portion of the cavity. Fortunately the wind had entirely lulled; but to prevent it from embarrassing us should it rise again, by its action on the mass, I directed the lads to gather up the folds as the gas escaped, and packed them away in the recesses of the cave. I then clambered up into the car.

"It was an immense and unwieldy affair, evidently designed by and for people who were greater adepts in luxury than in science. What perplexed me most was the absolute quietude

of all within. Opening a trap-door, and descending a flight of steps, I found myself in a small chamber, where by the light of a dim lamp, I perceived an old man of most venerable aspect, with long white hair and beard, evidently an oriental, reclining on a divan, and apparently more dead than alive.

"Hearing me enter, he said, in a tone of mingled reproach and entreaty, but without glancing toward me—

"'Zöe, why so long absent? Surely the ear needed not guidance so much as I needed thee?'

"He had scarcely finished his utterance when a sharp little cry broke from an adjoining chamber, which caused the old man to start and turn towards me. Whether the astonished look of his glistening eyes was caused most by the appearance of a stranger, or by the cry he had just heard, I could not tell, but he was evidently disturbed at both.

"'Can I help you?' I enquired, for I found him easily intelligible. We aërialists, you must know, are obliged to be conversant with the tongues of all civilised people.

"'Zöe ought to have announced you,' he said, with a gesture of courtesy. 'I presume that you have come on board us from some balloon that we have met. I fear I am too ill to converse with you. Zöe will speak for me. Methought I heard an infant's voice. You are a foreigner. Do foreigners carry young children on such voyages?'

"'I think you are in some error,' I returned, 'as to the precise position of your balloon. It is because I saw you were in some difficulty that I have come on board. Could I find her you named, or any other of the passengers, I would not intrude upon you.'

"'Not find Zöe!' he exclaimed. 'She was here just now, and only left me to look after the machinery and lights. That is always her part in our air-trips. Since we left Damascus she has not been so long absent from me.'

"His utter ignorance of what had happened to his balloon led me to surmise that his companion had met with some accident—probably fallen out immediately after discharging the signals which had attracted our attention.

"At that moment the cry was renewed. Unhooking the lamp from its chain, I went into the adjoining compartment, where I found an infant in a hastily-improvised cot.

"At the sight of the light, the cry ceased, and I took the child, cot and all, and set them down beside the old man.

"'I suppose this is *her* child of whom you were speaking,' I said. 'It is, indeed, young to—'

"'Man!' he cried, almost raising himself from his couch. '*Her* child! what mean you?'

"I refrained from speaking, and he gazed on it awhile with a wondering and troubled mien, muttering to himself words which I could not catch. Presently he said again,—

"'Where can Zöe be?'

"It was clear that there was no alternative but to tell him all, so far as I knew it, respecting his situation. When I had concluded, and made him comprehend that his companion must have been precipitated to the earth and lost, and that the sole inmates of the balloon were himself and a new-born infant, and that he had come down on an ice-field in the Arctic seas, and also that though we would do all in our power to aid him, we almost despaired of our own extrication, and, indeed, had hailed his approach as that of a possible deliverer to ourselves,—he said, in a tone of devout resignation,—

"'I understand it all now. It was willed. Save her child, if it be possible. You will find that here which will repay you. For me, I die.'

"And covering his face, he murmured,—

"'How she must have suffered through my blindness. Suffered in silence and alone. Would that her mother had lived. Zöe, my two Zöes, I come. Receive and forgive!'

"Thinking it best to leave him awhile to his grief, I quitted the car and returned to my party, who were in no little curiosity about our visitant. They had completed their work of expelling the gas, and were folding up the bulky fabric as I had directed them. I now stopped this, and said we would spread it partly overhead as a ceiling, and partly under foot as a carpet, in order to shelter the new comers who were unable to help themselves.

"'Why, who and what are they?' they inquired, all speaking at once.

"'In the first place,' I told them, 'there is an old man, a very venerable old man, with snowy hair and dark piercing eyes, who has lately left Damascus, and says he is going to die. In the second place, there was a young woman, his daughter, who took care of him, but has now disappeared.'

"'Quite lately?' asked Avenil.

"'So lately that he did not know of it, and was expecting to see her when I entered.'

"'Depend upon it, it was her falling out that made the balloon rise so suddenly, while we were watching it,' he said.

"I agreed that this seemed probable, and added, 'In the third place, there is a baby; which, seeing that the old man knew nothing about it until I discovered it, must have been introduced by the young woman very shortly before her disappearance.'

"'The poor little thing won't survive her long in these regions,' said one.

"'And who else is there? and why don't they show themselves?' asked another.

"I told them there was no one else; and that of these two the old man had made up his mind to die, and committed the infant to my charge, for his mind was as broken with grief as his body with age.

"'And the balloon is of no use to carry us away from this place,' said one, in a tone of disappointment.

"I said probably not, but that at any rate we might find some supplies which we could turn to account. And then selecting young Wilmer,—your father, Lawrence,—as the gentlest and most tender of the lads, I re-entered the chamber. The old man was still alive, but moaning feebly; and the child was so fast asleep, that I thought its mother must have given it a cordial before leaving it, a surmise which was afterwards confirmed by my finding a vial beneath the head of the couch.

"I knew little of medicine, and nothing of the management of children, but having a vague idea that the principal agencies

in sustaining their vitality are air, food, sleep, and warmth, I directed young Wilmer to open some cases which were in the chamber, and see if they contained any nutriment likely to be suitable for the child, while I endeavored to rouse the old man to action of some kind. The chamber which had evidently been constructed with a view to a warmer climate than that of the Arctic regions, was rapidly losing the heat I had found oppressive on my first visit, a heat supplied by the machinery of the balloon, and therefore no longer sustained now that the machinery was at rest. Its atmosphere, however, was far from pure and wholesome. So I begged the old man to let me remove him and the child to our own more roomy abode. But all my efforts were unheeded. He refused to move or to be consoled, and by turns murmured the names of Zöe and Solomon, and something about a talisman, whose aid he seemed to be invoking for the child.

"In the meantime, young Wilmer had been to work to good purpose. He had found a case containing a preparation of milk, solidified into small bars. After tasting these, I determined to administer them to the infant. Not to make this part of my story too long, I will state at once that the old man died a few hours after his descent, having uttered nothing that could give us a clue to his name; and, indeed, only once speaking coherently, on which occasion he asked the month and day of the year, and said something which I took for an adjuration addressed to the sun.

"The child became our first care, and we seemed tacitly to regard it as a point of honor to save ourselves in order to save it, and rear it to manhood. I say manhood, for it proved to be a boy. This important discovery was made on the occasion of the question being started as to what we should call it. We were sitting, soon after its arrival, around our camp illuminator and warmer, which was no other than our electro-magnesian reflector already mentioned, and which was so constructed as to be readily convertible into a small and luminous stove; young Wilmer, in his function of nurse, held the infant on his knees, and it was gazing, with eyes wide open, at the light. It never

cried, which was a great comfort to us male creatures, for we should have been terribly puzzled what to do if it had; and it had taken very kindly to the food we had given it. Well, we were sitting thus when some one suggested that we ought to call it Zöe.

"'Zöe, indeed!' exclaimed nurse Wilmer, indignantly; 'why, it's a boy!'

"The observation showed how judicious had been my choice of him for nurse. The possibility of such a thing had not occurred to anyone else. We could not resist having a good laugh over our dullness, and, to our surprise, the child, as if because it then heard human voices for the first time, actually joined in the laugh by making a sort of crowing noise.

"'Is there a name on the balloon, that will do?' asked one of the lads. But the balloon bore no name. Another suggested something implying ice or air; and it was even proposed to call it Ariel, and give it one of my names for surname. Ariel Bertie, we thought, sounded well, and I was strongly inclined to adopt this suggestion; the more as I had fully made up my mind to adopt the child as my own, should I ever succeed in escaping from that place, and reaching home with it in safety. The similarity of the name, I considered, would make it appear to strangers as if it were really a blood relation. The child itself, too, seemed by its crowing to approve, at least, of having some distinctive name.

"However, young Wilmer, looking up from it, said that he had read in an old story-book, of a wild Indian, who, being on a desolate island, was rescued from death by a white man, and in gratitude devoted himself to the white man's service, and was called after the day of the week on which he had been saved.—Friday.

"'And as this is the last day of the winter solstice, and we may regard him as a little ray from heaven to lighten our gloom, let one of his names be Christmas!'

"So with vehement rapidity exclaimed young Avenil; and, as if in approbation of the proposal, the infant chirped and crowed with redoubled energy.

"'Listen! it is singing a carol,' cried nurse Wilmer. 'A Christmas Carol—hear its caroling?'

"'Then call it one,' said Avenil.

"'One what?' I asked.

"'Christmas Carol. It's a charming name.'

"'And we will call it Chrissy, for short," said the boy-nurse, bending down and kissing the child, and then handing it round for each one of us to kiss as we repeated the name, Christmas Carol.

"We all agreed it was a charming name, and wonderfully appropriate, from whatever point of view we regarded it. For it had come at the very birth of the year, when the days first begin to wax after the winter solstice, and in the moment of our deepest despair; and we spoke of the old man just dead, its grandfather, as the old year, and of its mother Zöe, as the life that went out in giving it life. And as we looked on the infant that had so wondrously descended among us, and repeated the name whereby it was to be known among men, we forgot the peril we were still in, and warmed towards the most ancient of sciences, Astronomy, and the poetry of its kindred Mythology, and were, I believe, at that moment, about the happiest party on earth.

CHAPTER IV.

"A DEEP, broad crevice ran across one corner of the floor of our cavern. In this we deposited the body of the old man, filling it up above him with broken bits of ice, which when driven in with blows became welded together, forming a sarcophagus of clear crystal, warranted not only not to consume the body, but to preserve it from decay, until the berg itself should finally bow its head and sink and melt in the sea.

"The next task was to investigate the nature and contents of the balloon. Young Avenil set himself to make an examination of the machinery. The other lads rifled the stores,

and I sought for some document by which we might learn the history of the late occupants.

"It was little substantial help that I expected to get from any discoveries we might make. It was unlikely that the stock of provisions would go far towards keeping us alive for the five or six weeks still remaining of utter darkness, during which it would be hopeless to attempt to leave the berg. Fitted, as the machine probably was, to be a mere pleasure-conveyance of a wealthy and luxurious Damascene family, it was not likely to contain more than was sufficient for a short trip. But what we found led us to a different conclusion. Not only was it overladen with provisions and luxuries sufficient to sustain in comfort a number of persons for several weeks, but it contained jewels and money to a great value. So that, altogether, we were led to conclude that the old man and his daughter were, probably in consequence of some unpleasantness connected with the latter's situation, in the act of emigrating with all their property in search of a new home, when by reason of illness, or storms, they were driven out of their course, and carried by the currents of the atmosphere to the Arctic Seas.

"The discoveries I had made intensified the interest I already felt in the child. It was evidently the heir to people of consideration and wealth, that would enable it to take up any position in the world for which it might by character and abilities be fitted.

"So occupied was I with these reflections, that I had not given my mind to what was really of far more importance to us just then, than anything else in the world; namely, the possibility of turning the balloon to account in contriving our escape. There was clearly no other way, for the berg had evidently reunited with the masses of ice around it, as was shown by its perfect immobility; and a journey over the ice-field would be attended by hardships that must be fatal to at least one member of the party. Since the stars had become visible, there had been no difficulty in ascertaining our latitude. It was a degree or two above that of Spitzbergen: that is, the polar distance of our berg was about eight degrees. About

our longitude we were necessarily still in the dark; and our only hope of finding it lay in our hooking the telegraph. This, however, was practically of no consequence, as the very size of our berg showed that we must be too far from any coast for us to attempt to reach it over the ice. By knowing the latitude we were enabled to determine the period remaining of total darkness. And this, as I have mentioned, had still five or six weeks to run.

"I was talking over these matters with the lads, as we sat round our little stove, the child as usual lying on young Wilmer's lap, and flourishing marvellously, when Avenil abruptly asked me who was the maker of the broken cylinder of our aëromotive, and whether the size and number were stamped upon it.

"Thinking he was indulging in visions of a claim for damages against the manufacturer on our return home, I twitted him on the score of his reflections taking a more sordid and less practical turn than usual.

"He had then the same imperturbable good temper that distinguishes him in his present exalted position, and he made no reply to my taunt. But after the rest of the party had turned in and were asleep, he beckoned to me to take the lamp and come outside our place of shelter. When I got there, he said—

"'What I want to know is this:—can the fans be worked with a less powerful decomposer than the one we have broken?'

"I said, certainly; the only difference would be in our speed; but that I did not care about that, for, provided we had power enough to carry us aloft, and sustain us there, the winds would be sure sooner or later to carry us to some eligible place for descending. At any rate we could hardly be in a worse one.

"'Well,' he said, 'now will you answer my question about the broken cylinder?'

"I mentioned the maker's name, and the number of the piece.

"'Now look at this,' he said, 'and tell me what you think of it.' And he led me to the machinery of the strange balloon, which he had been taking to pieces, and uncovering the cylinder, which he had concealed, bade me look at it.

"I did look at it, and then at the machinery of which it formed a part, and then at the boy. And then I said—

"'Do any of the others know of this?'

"'Of course not,' he answered. 'I was not going to raise hopes only to have them disappointed. But what do you think of it?'

"'Think of it? Why that this cylinder, though less powerful than our own, is by the same maker, and of precisely the same kind, and that it will take us up off the ice, and if we have moderate weather, enable us to steer homewards.' And I grasped his hand in joyous revulsion of feeling at the immediate prospect of escape for my lads.

"It is true that I ought sooner to have seen this possibility, as all the machinery used in the East is of British manufacture. But the events connected with the arrival of the balloon had occupied nearly all my thoughts. Besides, the acquisition of such an addition to our stock of provisions had removed from my mind all apprehension for the present.

"I will not detail the experiments which occupied the next two or three days. Suffice it to say, that after several trials we succeeded in fitting the new combination of machinery so as to give sufficient power for our purpose. The moment of our quitting the iceberg was one of intense emotion; the thought of our various homes and the feelings we knew would be working there, had our position been known, dominating all others.

"Next to this, the strongest feeling I verily believe was that of eagerness to save the child whose advent had so strangely ministered to our salvation, and of curiosity to see whether its subsequent career would correspond with its commencement.

"The important question, in which direction we should steer, was soon decided in favor of home, though it was by much the longest journey. It is true we might easily have regained the Pole, which was but some eight degrees distant, and

there we should have found a fresh vessel to take us home. But the lads all shrank from a return to its gloomy though hospitable shores, and cried out for the sun, and the light, and home; and the little Criss caroled so cheerily at the sound of their acclamations, that I determined to undertake the longer voyage without more ado.

"So we departed, rising slowly and steadily from off the cratered pinnacle of ice which had been our home for so many days; leaving on it a burning beacon, which remained in sight long after we had started. The air was perfectly calm; and so, slowly and without mishap, and glad not to rise very high, for fear of the effect of a rare atmosphere upon the child's tender lungs, we steered for the invisible sun, remaining ignorant of our longitude until we had got well within the daylight.

When next we came near enough the earth to discern the character of the things upon it, we were pleased to find that we were coming among friends. For I espied the familiar outlines of one of those stereotyped stations for aërial and railway locomotion, with which our Government has provided the whole of its Asiatic protectorate. And by the signal hoisted on it for the information of aërial travellers, we learnt that it was one of the north-eastern-most stations of British China.

"It soon appeared that we bore a more dilapidated aspect than we were aware of; for a large number of spectators assembled to witness our descent in the enclosure appointed for the purpose. At first they were disposed to make merry at our appearance; but when they beheld the gravity which we all steadfastly maintained as we stepped one by one out of the car, now properly secured by the station officials; and when finally young Wilmer came forth bearing the infant, laughing and crowing in his arms, and we proceeded to the Station Hotel, the curiosity, especially of the Chinese portion of the crowd, knew no bounds. They would have it that one of us was a woman in disguise; and then, that we must have abducted the child. Hearing murmurs to this effect, and not desiring to excite the hostility of the natives, I asked one of the officials in their hearing, if there was a place of worship at hand, where a

thanksgiving service for escape from great peril could be performed; and learning that a Buddhist temple was near, I sent a liberal fee, to secure the services of the priest. I took care to say all this aloud, in the language of the country, for former experiences had taught me that the nearest way to the hearts of a barbarian people is by paying respect to their religion. And I knew from history that nothing had contributed more to induce the Chinese to entrust the political management of their empire to us on our retiring from India, when we had taught its people to govern themselves, and hold their own against the Russians; or to dispose them favorably towards our beliefs, than the conviction that we should pay the same respect to their religion and customs that we showed to those of each other in our own country, as well as to those of the Hindoos.

"I also sent for a native newspaper reporter."

CHAPTER V.

"We were fortunate in finding a nurse for the infant in a young English widow of gentle nurture, who had just lost her own child, and was desirous of returning to England, her wedded relation having come to an end."

[Here the old man's voice faltered, and became broken. The cause of his emotion was known to few beside myself; but he succeeded in mastering it, and presently went on.]

"We did not escape the usual penalty of novelty while we remained in the Mongol town. It was on the western borders of the sea of Japan that we alighted. We were duly interviewed by the caterers for the public press, especially those of the native religious papers which my act of piety had conciliated. Some of these were illustrated, and marvellous were the sketches they produced of our encampment on the ice-peak; for they had depicted faces of buried dead peering with open eyes through the lid of their crystal coffin, from the walls and

floor of our crater; while watching over us was seen the shadowy form of their principal divinity,—the one to whom the temple I had patronized was specially dedicated. All these and other paintings were done in the same style of Chinese art that prevailed thousands of years ago; for they are the most conservative people in the world. I am inclined to believe that, like the horse, the bee, and many other highly-organized animals, the Chinese have long ago reached the utmost perfection of which their particular species is capable; so that they do not, like us, keep developing into new varieties. The period during which a race retains the faculty of changing for the better, which with us constitutes the secret of civilization, has long since been passed by them, and their sole care is to continue to exist without palpable deterioration. They are the bees of humanity, very ingenious and industrious, but they do not get on any further. They live only to repeat what has been done before over and over again. Their organization has quenched individuality.

"It is possible, however, that such stereotyping of character is but a resultant from the stereotyping of conditions. Now the Japanese, who were long ago called the Englishmen of the East, form a wonderful contrast to their neighbors across the strait. But for us, China, and its splendid coal-fields, would long ago have been theirs.

"But I see one of my young friends opposite yawning. I am obliged to him for doing so. It was a needed reminder that mere reflections are apt to be tedious, especially when they have nothing to do with the subject in hand. And I undertook to relate facts, not reflections. In my excuse, let me tell you that the life I have led so much up in the air, and so much alone, without a sight or a sound to attract the attention, and guided only by the needle, without reference to aught without,—like a soul by its internal ideal,—is very apt to make a man reflective. He comes to regard himself as a bystander to the world, and to think and talk about it as if he were not a part of it.

"We brought ourselves and the infant all safe to Europe and

England by the Great Eastern Railway, the new nurse being timid about the air-voyage, and the physicians whom I consulted saying that her fears, if excited by being forced to undertake it, might have an injurious effect upon the child. I almost regretted nurse Wilmer when I heard this, so much did I prefer my own mode of travelling. But I gave in for the child's sake, and amply was I repaid for so doing. There are angels in the real, as well as in the ideal world."

And Bertie's voice trembled again as he closed his manuscript.

CHAPTER VI.

The work of which the foregoing narrative is to serve as commencement, will in reality be a joint production, to the greater portion of which I shall enact the part of editor rather than of author; for it is derived from the reminiscences of the loving hearts of those who knew *him* best, and who, during its progress have been continuously associated with me in our common home.

This home is no other than the well-known "Club" (as our ancestors taught us to name such institutions), already referred to under the name of *The Triangle*. As I hope our story will be read in regions whither the fame of The Triangle has not yet travelled, I will here mention that it is the oldest, and as its members fondly believe, the most highly considered, of the institutions which have, more than any others, served to ameliorate the social life of modern times. It has been the model for the numberless similar clubs which have now long existed among all kinds and classes of civilized people, and in their perfection of economy and organization, brought facilities for comfort, fellowship, and culture otherwise unattainable, within easy reach of every rank and grade of life, without detriment to domesticity or individuality. And here I may remark that

in no respect does our idea of perfection in organization differ from that of antiquity more than in this,—that while formerly its highest triumph was to repress, so now its sole, or at least main, aim, is to develop individuality. Other clubs have such names as *The Right-angled Triangle, The Obtuse-angled Triangle,* or *The Acute-angled Triangle,* and are called for short, *The Right, The Obtuse,* or *The Acute.* There is also the *Isosceles,* and the *Equilateral.* Ours alone is known as *The Triangle.*

The determining idea of all these institutions is derived from the fundamental plan of human life. They consist, therefore, of three departments, each distinct and complete in itself, yet all inseparably united to form an harmonious whole. One angle of the building is devoted to men, another to women, and the third to both in common, with their families.

Formerly it was only in this last section of the building that the inhabitants of the various divisions could meet together, except by calling upon each other privately by an external entrance. Now, each division has its own hall private to itself, the common one for all having recently been constructed. In the opinion of the members of The Triangle, the propinquity of the family folks is as desirable as that of others. We are, therefore, emphatically an Equilateral Triangle, and dispense altogether with diagonals or bi-sections; for these involve an expedient which we hold to be subversive of the essential significance of the club principle. The example of the Square, Rectangular, or Parallelogrammatical Clubs, which have been started as an improvement upon the Triangular ones, and which provide a fourth and separate division for the exclusive use of couples ungifted with offspring, has never obtained favor at *The Triangle.*

It is by the frank adoption of the Triangular principle that modern society has reconciled the long conflicting ideas of the Home and the Commune. Co-existing harmoniously beneath the same roof, the former is free from invasion or dictation from without, while the latter involves no deprivation of domesticity or individuality. *Convenience, not interference,* is their motto. We thus vindicate our claim to be the most perfect

exponents of the most perfect civilization yet attained,—the civilization which, while affording complete security, ministers also to the promotion of individuality and the development of the affections.

It was this that endeared the Triangle to the great and loving heart of him whose loss we are now so sorely lamenting. A multiplication of distinctions beyond those broadly indicated by life itself, he regarded as a departure from the basis of Nature, and a return to the system which proved so disastrous to our ancestors.

These, as the lessons of our childhood inform us, used to imagine that they had detected imperfections in the structure of the universe, and particularly of the moral world; and in the plenitude of their presumption set themselves to improve upon natural order by artificial expedients contrived without reference to the principles of that order. Their sentiment of humanity was undermined by their sentiment of patriotism; and their sentiment of patriotism was undermined by the yet more sub-divisional character of their religion. It was only through the rise of a spirit superior to both patriotism and religion (as then understood), that our country was rescued from falling into utter disintegration and insignificance.

The struggle by which this happy era was inaugurated was a tremendous one: and inasmuch as it was a struggle of principles, apart from all material vested interests or other forms of selfishness, it is regarded by us as constituting the grandest period in our history.

As some of its details will necessarily be alluded to in the course of our narrative, I will not here say more respecting it than that its result was to extinguish for ever, so far as the vast bulk of our population is concerned, that antagonism between the Church and the World, which had for centuries been the fount of woes innumerable to mankind; and to obtain recognition of the essential identity of the two opposing forces. It is the return to the basis of nature, through the abrogation of the ancient divorce between the various departments of the human understanding, that is symbolized in the triune form of our

modern life. Hence the love borne to it by one who more vividly than any other of modern times realized the essential Oneness of Humanity, in its capabilities and significance, with its sub-standing and informing principle.

It must not be supposed that the idea of such an institution as *The Triangle* attained its full development all at once. It required the *Emancipation* to restore the taste for the almost forgotten art of marriage. The demand for dwellings suitable for couples and families of moderate means, had led to the institution of Flats or Suites, and even of *Radials*, as a ring of houses was called, having a central kitchen and service in common. These were a great step in the promotion of comfort and economy; but they failed to minister to that fulness of social intercourse which all cultivated natures crave. For, however well adapted to each other a man and a woman may be, their intellectual capacities require to draw at least a part of their sustenance from without. Otherwise, domesticity itself becomes a bar to the maintenance of individuality.

To this end they must have a varied society within their reach. It was reserved for the Triangle to show how this want was to be met. People who watched with curiosity the growth of the great three-cornered building which overlooks the Hampstead Park, little thought that they were witnessing the birth of a system that was to revolutionize human life. No greater proof of its perfect adaptation to all the wants of developed humanity could be found, than in its rapid extension to every class of the community. Even the artisan and the laborer now have their triangular clubs of residence—the club that civilizes; in place of the "beershop" that brutalizes—as our ancestors knew to their cost, though they were so terribly perplexed to find a substitute for the latter, that some of them went to the length of denouncing the social instinct altogether, as well as the use of all stimulating beverages.

Concerning the *Triangle*, I will here only add further, that it is situated in the heart of the *intellectual* quarter of London; so called because here dwell chiefly those who are devoted to literature, science, and art. To the east of this quarter lies the

mercantile and industrial; to the west, the fashionable; and to the south, the governmental and legal quarter, the whole covering an area which to our ancestors of the earlier part of the Victorian era would have appeared monstrous and impossible. Yet it is not so much in a lateral direction that London has spread, as upwards, through the enormous elevation given to our modern buildings.

CHAPTER VII.

I SHALL now continue the narrative which Bertie has so well begun for me, and endeavor to weave into a harmonious whole the various items supplied me from the sources at my command. Next to Bertie Greathead, it is mainly from the Avenil family that I have drawn my information. The whole of the Wilmers, to whom I belong, early left the scene, and only reappeared on it towards the end.

It was by general acclamation of the whole party of the iceberg, and of their relatives, that Bertie undertook the charge of the little Christmas Carol. As his calling caused him frequently to be absent, and as the child's property promised to be considerable, Bertie begged that the fathers of Avenil and of my father might be associated with him in the trust. This was done, and when my father and Avenil came of age they also were made trustees.

The only difficulty was about the place of residence for the child and Alma Nutrix, for so the new nurse was called. Bertie insisted on their living with him, so attached had he become to the child. But his bachelor's quarters were altogether too straitened to admit such a party. His fellow guardians wished him to come into the Triangle. But he was not a member; and on making application, and being asked which division of the club he desired to join, he found himself ineligible for any. He could not have the child and its nurse

with him in the single men's quarters; and he could not go with them to the single women's quarters. As for the married folks' division, he would not hear of it. He was not qualified, he said, and did not mean to be qualified, to occupy that department.

In the meantime, the child and nurse were accommodated by the Avenils, in their own quarters in the club, and Bertie used to visit them there. The Avenils had thus an excellent opportunity of becoming well acquainted with Alma's character. What they saw of her led them to have a high regard for her, and it occurred to them that the best solution of the difficulty would be her marriage with Bertie. She, however, made no secret of her unwillingness to enter again upon an association of the kind. Bertie became more and more dissatisfied at the barrier to his complete ownership of the child. At length he abruptly, and some say very crossly, proposed to Alma, that as they both liked having the child with them, they should overcome their mutual aversion and be married, for the sake of the better taking care of it. She said, that if that was all he wanted, she had no objection; and so the couple, after entering into *a contract of the third class*, became with the infant, inmates of the married folks' quarters. It was said that they continued to be very cold and distant to each other for a considerable period after this. But the child, who so early in its career had power thus to bring these two persons together in spite of themselves, exhibited its power yet more in reconciling them to their union afterwards. For, to the great amusement and delight of their friends, Bertie and Alma fairly fell in love with each other after their marriage; and so long as she lived, no more truly attached couple was to be found. It was his reminiscence of this tender passage in his history that caused Bertie's voice to falter in his recital. She died when little Criss was between three and four years old, leaving no child of her own to divide Bertie's affection; and has been sincerely mourned by him ever since.

Bertie then, for his own solace, took the child with him on an aërial journey. It had begun to pine a little, as if for its

foster mother. The journey did it so much good that Bertie concluded that, having been born in the air, the air was its natural element. After this it was his constant companion, until old enough to go to school. It was doubtless in a measure owing to the action of the life aloft upon a peculiar temperament, that little Criss grew up to be the man he was. It served to develop a temperament which was itself the result of an union between two races of opposite characteristics. A careful examination of the contents of the balloon, made after Bertie's arrival in England, revealed letters and other documents which proved that the old man, though himself of Jewish extraction, had married an European woman; and that Criss's mother Zöe was their daughter, being named after her mother. She, again, had a husband or lover, who was a Greek, whose child Criss was. Her father hated this Greek, and believed him to be the emissary of enemies who were plotting against him. It was to escape from their malevolence that he had embarked in his balloon with his daughter and his wealth, intending to settle in some country where he would be more secure than in Syria. He was completely in the dark as to how far matters had gone between his daughter and her lover. It had been with a breaking heart, and on the eve of her expected confinement, that she had received his command to enter the balloon and start instantly. She dared not disobey him. Her lover was not at hand. A hasty, blurred half-finished letter which was found in the balloon, evidently intended for him, revealed much of the above. It remained doubtful whether her fall was accidental or intentional. The fact of her child being there, newly-born, and helpless, made it impossible that she could have contemplated abandoning it, if in her senses. But agony and terror have sometimes been known to induce women to do even this, under a condition of society in which they and their affections were regarded as the property of their parents or other relatives, and it was accounted a crime of the deepest turpitude to assert a right of ownership in their own hearts and persons.

Thank heaven we have got so far past that stage of woman's

long martyrdom, that her mistakes in the bestowal of her affections are now met by a smile of encouragement to be wiser in the future, and not by a fierce frown of unrelenting condemnation for all time to come.

Bertie found some confirmation of these conclusions afterwards, on visiting Damascus. There was much mystery about the old man; and his sudden disappearance was only in keeping with all that was known of him. He was believed to be connected in some way with one of the ancient Royal Families of the East, and to be in constant fear of attempts on his life or property. Besides his house in Damascus, he had a summer residence on Lebanon; and as no claimants had appeared for these, they were taken charge of by the authorities, to be kept sealed up for the period appointed by law in such cases.

Of Criss's father, the Greek Lover of Zöe, Bertie found no trace whatever. And he and his fellow-guardians decided that it was not necessary to advertise the finding of the child and the property, inasmuch as there could be no doubt that any lawful claimant would not hesitate to advertise for them himself. No such advertisement appeared, and Bertie owned to himself that it was only with vast reluctance that he could have brought himself to yield his charge even to its own father. The non-appearance of a claimant was therefore a great relief to him.

To one portion of the contents of the balloon I must recur; it is a portion which plays an important part in my story.

The examination made by Bertie on the iceberg had necessarily been hasty and superficial. It was shortly after reaching home that he requested the elder Avenil and Wilmer to be present at the opening of the boxes, as he considered whatever of value they might contain to be the property of the child, and therefore vested in them jointly as its trustees.

Mr. Avenil's knowledge of mineralogy was sufficient to enable him to perceive that some of the gems were of great value. A jeweller with whom he was acquainted being called in, the report he gave was so startling, that they determined,

with the jeweller's advice, to consult a first-class diamond merchant. There was one in London at that moment, a Jew, who was connected with the great houses in the principal capitals, and was acknowledged as standing at the head of his profession. This man, on being introduced to a view of the gems in Avenil's rooms, was so astounded that he sank back in his seat and looked wistfully at the trustees. Recovering himself, he enquired if he might be made acquainted with the history of the jewels, and the mode in which they had come into the present holder's hands.

Bertie contented himself with saying that they were heirlooms in the family of the ward of whom he and his two friends were trustees. Finding that nothing more was forthcoming, the merchant said:

"Diamonds like these are always catalogued. No two famous stones have precisely the same weight or form, and few have precisely the same hue. Here is a printed list of all the principal diamonds in the world, including those which have disappeared; for such things are never destroyed. They are always kept out of the way of fire, but they disappear through being stolen and hidden away, and the thieves dying and leaving no note. I propose, with your permission, to weigh some of these larger ones, and compare them with my list."

He then produced a balance of a marvellously delicate construction, and having ascertained the exact weight and counted the sides of a wonderfully magnificent diamond, he referred to his book. What he found there made him start again. He said nothing, however, but proceeded with tremulous hand to make a like comparison with some of the others. After referring to another part of his book, he addressed the trustees and said:

"Gentlemen, when you have heard what I am about to say, you will not wonder at my surprise, and, I trust, not be averse to giving me the information I have already requested of you. The last time that these gems were seen in public, it was in the capacity of crown jewels of the brilliant but short-lived empire of the North Pacific. You are doubtless all

familiar with the extraordinary career of the Californian sailor-warrior, who maintained the independence of the states of North America which border on the Pacific, against those on the east of the Rocky Mountains, and erected them into an empire unrivalled in grandeur and extent, bringing all the islands of that great ocean, with their enormous wealth of produce, beneath his sway; and who was finally baffled in his scheme of universal dominion in that hemisphere, by the determined and heroic resistance of the allied powers of Australia and New Zealand. Ah, gentlemen, those were exciting times in that hemisphere. Then, for the first time since the days sung by Moses, Homer, and Milton, earth, sea, and air bore an equal share in the contests of men. The lofty ranges of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada witnessed many a terrible struggle between the armies of the eastern and western powers of the continent. The Pacific swarmed with war-ships, swifter and mightier than any before imagined. And ever and anon in the upper regions of the atmosphere, occurred dreadful conflicts between the aërial armies of the rival powers; while here and there on the lovely but lonely isles of the great ocean would drop down a detachment of invincible warriors, and in the name of one or the other of the contending parties reduce them to submission and tribute.

"Forgive my repeating what every school-boy knows, and the oldest of us can almost remember; but professional enthusiasm has invested that period with an overpowering interest for me; for never before or since have gems attained such a value as under that brilliant and reckless ruler. It was on the downfall of the adventurer, for so I suppose I must call him, seeing that he did not succeed in establishing his kingdom, that these gems were lost. His end was as strange as his origin and career.

"Born in a Californian placer, and carrying in his veins the blood of that long famous heroic family of France, the Bonapartes, and of the renowned high priest of the once powerful sect of the Mormons, King George Francis, on the collapse of his empire, quitted his capital, San Francisco, in an aëromotive.

His hope was to reach the Sandwich Islands, the chief depôt and head-quarters of his fleet. Once there, he could for a long time defy the concentrated forces of his foes, and enjoy the luxuries of the voluptuous court he was accustomed to hold there. His flight was at once known to his enemies, who were assembled on the coast of California, and an aërial squadron started in pursuit. The distance being but two thousand miles, there was no time to be lost if he was to be overtaken on the way. He was known to be heavily laden, and to have his chief valuables with him; and he was accompanied by his minister of finance, a man of Oriental extraction, who had extraordinary influence over the emperor, and over whom hung some mystery. Many believed him to be a Jew.

"His pursuers reckoned on their superior speed to reach the islands first unperceived, and capture him on his arrival before he could land. Fixing their rendezvous for the summit of Mouna Roa, they got there in time to conceal themselves in the hollows of an extinct crater, and take up their posts of observation. Heavily laden though they knew the car of the fugitive to be, its machinery was so powerful that they had no reason to suppose he would depart from his usual custom of flying high until directly over his intended destination, and then dropping straight down upon it. Their plan was to intercept him at the moment of his descent, and its success depended mainly upon his being unaided by his partizans in the islands. Had he telegraphed to them of his coming, a detachment of guards and officials would have risen to meet him, in too strong force to be withstood. The absence of any such demonstration led the party on the look-out to surmise that either through confidence, haste, or treachery, he had not announced his coming.

"They had not long to wait. In a very few hours a spot appeared in the north-eastern horizon, which soon developed into the well-known outlines of the imperial car. Rising at once into the air, the enemy disposed themselves so as to be able to make sure of intercepting their prize. The comparative diminutiveness of their vessels would have rendered them

unseen by him, while his was plainly visible to them; moreover, the smoke which arose from the volcano beneath, the terrible Kilauea, then in a state of violent activity, would serve to make the whole scene on their side indistinct to one at a distance. Even when on his near approach the emperor perceived the hostile squadron, he had no reason to suppose it to be other than some of his own islanders, or other excursionists, on a visit to the renowned volcano.

"Too late he discovered that he was surrounded by enemies. The imperial car had been brought to a stand-still preparatory to its descent. They had considerable way on them, while he was motionless. This was the moment for which they had watched. They darted on him like a flock of swift eagles on an unwieldy swan. Seeing the capture of his vessel imminent, the Emperor, who was a man of unbounded intrepidity, committed himself to a parachute, in the use of which he was a tolerable adept; and presently his enemies, to their immense chagrin, saw him slipping through their hands, as he descended, at first rapidly, and then, as the resistance of the air began to tell, slowly and steadily towards the earth.

"Now came the catastrophe which led to my telling this long story. During the struggle aloft, the contending parties had drifted immediately over the vast crater of Kilauea. Let me describe it, for I have seen it. No diamond merchant considers his education complete until he has made a pilgrimage to that fiery sarcophagus of so much beauty and wealth.

"Ascending the mountain, and traversing the table-land, you come suddenly to the brink of a gulf at least a mile in diameter, and with vertical sides from one to two thousand feet deep. The whole interior of this abyss is a furnace of molten lava, agitated like the ocean in a tempest, and tossing aloft billows of fire, which do not, as in the ocean, flow in one direction, impelled by a steady wind, but meet from opposite quarters with such violence as to dash their fiery spray high in the air. And all this fierce contention goes on amid such appalling sounds of rage and sighs, and groans and murmurs, that it is impossible to avoid fancying one is gazing upon the fabled hell

of the poets, and watching the throes of giant fiends in their agony.

"How the Emperor came to meet his fate none could tell. Probably the mephitic vapors stifled his senses, and made him unable to direct his course. But he was seen to descend into the very midst of this furnace, and with him went the finest collection of diamonds in the world. There can be no doubt of it. They had disappeared from the Palace at San Francisco. They were not found in the captured balloon; and they have not been heard of since. I ought to mention, if only for the credit of my own countryman, that an heroic attempt was made to save him. His Chancellor of the Exchequer seeing his danger, made a dash at him on another parachute, and actually succeeded in overtaking and grappling with him for several moments. But he was forced at last to let him go, and with difficulty saved himself.

"And now, pardon me if once more I ask how these jewels which, a couple of generations ago, were thus lost in the crater of Kilauea, have returned into existence in the hands of their present owner. If I am exceeding discretion in making inquiry, I apologize and withdraw it."

All looked to Bertie Greathead. He had resolved to keep the matter secret, at least for the present. He felt the temptation strong upon him to reply—

"Lost in a crater of fire, they were found in a crater of ice!"

But he resisted it, and observed merely that it was probably a case of mistaken identity.

The merchant shook his head, and looked disappointed. But he only said,—

"In that case the previous history of the lost jewels can have no interest for you. Now what do you want done with these? I may be able to find you a purchaser, but I can undertake no responsibility about title."

"Of course not," said Mr. Avenil, somewhat sharply; "that is our business. All you have to do is to describe them as heirlooms in a family that wishes to realize their value. And it

occurs to me, that as we are disposing of the property of a minor, it will be well to make a condition providing for their re-purchase at his option on the occasion of his attaining his majority."

The merchant declared that such a condition was without a precedent, but that he would do his best. He had at that very time a commission to provide a set of diamonds to be worn at the coronation of the Emperor of Central Africa, a ceremonial which had been long deferred, owing to the loss of the crown jewels of that country, and the failure to procure any worthy to replace them.

Not to multiply details, I will only add that a sale of the jewels was effected in the manner proposed, the eagerness of the African monarch to obtain them at any price the moment he received his agent's report, leading him to consent to the unusual proviso for their future redemption, rather than forego their present possession.

It was highly improbable that any private individual would care to keep such an amount as that of the purchase-money lying idle in the shape of jewels, but the trustees were agreed as to the propriety of retaining the option, and the method they adopted of investing the fortune accruing from the sale would enable its possessor easily to re-purchase them on coming of age. For it was carefully placed in good governmental and co-operative securities, to average the moderate rate of ten per cent., the income being re-invested as it came in, so as to allow the capital to accumulate by compound interest.

Bertie was unwilling to accept any portion of the child's income towards its maintenance and education. But he was overruled by Mr. Avenil, who said that the immensity of the fortune would give his scruples about such a trifle the appearance of affectation, and also that it would be unfair to the boy himself to restrict his advantages to suit the far narrower means of any of themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

Under the loving guardianship of Bertie Greathead, little Criss Carol throve wondrously. Mr. Avenil and Mr. Wilmer knew well that they were doing the best for the child's highest welfare in committing it to such superintendence. They knew that the hardness and irresponsibility of character likely to be engendered by the possession of ample wealth would find its best corrective in the companionship of one so simple, tender, and true as Bertie the aëronaut. Whatever intellectual supervision was needed, Avenil would himself supply, but he agreed fully with Mr. Wilmer in ranking character as above attainments, especially for one exempted by fortune from the struggle for existence, and endowed with an almost unlimited power of influencing others.

The struggle for existence! I shall not, I trust, be neglecting my story for my reflections, if I make here some observations respecting the origin and development of the period which produced the character I have undertaken to present. We are, each one of us, the product, not of the present only, but of the past. Nature, though it repudiates the vicarious principle, links all things together in an inevitable sequence. It is to the ever-memorable nineteenth century—a period to which we trace the first dawning of our glorious Emancipation—that we are indebted for the clue whereby we have escaped entanglement in those labyrinths of transcendental speculation, in which our forefathers lost themselves.

How would they have rejoiced could they have seen in their day the revelation of the divine method of the universe which has been made to us!—could they have known that in the original substance which filled infinity was such capacity for evolution as would account for all subsequent phenomena whatever; that the various steps of physical motion, heat, life, light, sensation, thought, conscience, follow each other necessarily, evolved, as the spark from the contact of steel with flint, from

the contact of part with part,—given only time, or rather eternity, for the process! and this not over the infinite whole merely, but throughout each separate portion.

It was the struggle for existence,—a struggle often, doubtless, in those who are too weak to endure to the end, fatal to that Conscience, which alone we recognize as worthy to be the final cause of all things—that at length produced the conscience which now governs the world,—at least, in its maturer parts,—and constitutes the salt of its preservation. Read by this light, history exhibits nation after nation, race after race, Aryan, Turanian, Semitic, all faltering and failing, tried and found wanting, through lack of capacity for development up to this the crowning point of the structure of humanity. No single race was equal to the achievement; and so it comes that now the first place on the earth is held by the peoples into whose composition enters something of each of these, but most of the Aryan, and that under its Anglo-Teutonic form, this being preëminently the race which acknowledges the supremacy of man's brain and heart, and ranks the intellect, the moral sense, and the affections of living humanity, as above all traditions, and conventions whatsoever.

Such was the significance of "the glorious Emancipation."

Young Christmas Carol was fortunate alike in the period of his existence, and in the persons among whom he fell. Had he, with his beauty, his wealth, and his mystery, lighted upon our isles in the days when Money was king and Conventionality was god, the story of his life could scarcely have been other than a tale of the degradation and ruin of a character, of his essential innermost sacrificed to his accidental outermost, to the utter effacement of the divine capacities of his being as an individual. But he came in a time when the dominant characteristics and achievements of modern society were such as found fair representatives in men like those who became his friends and guardians. Greathead, Wilmer, and Avenil, each was an exponent of a different yet co-ordinate factor in the sum of triune perfection. With Goodness, Beauty, and Use thus im-

personated, to preside over his youth, Christmas Carol had all the external advantages that the world even of these our days could bestow.

I assign the function of representing Beauty in the above-mentioned category, to my grandfather and father, each of whom in turn were the lad's trustees and guardians; for the same exquisite spirit of poesy animated them both, and their influence had much to do with the nurture of the lad's nature on its softer side. Would that death had not so early removed my father. Yet even Criss's ample repayment to me would not have exceeded his indebtedness to him. I believe my father's chief regret in dying arose from his desire to carry on to completion the education of which he had helped to lay the foundation.

Physically and mentally little Criss Carol exhibited the characteristics of his ancestry. The Greek came out in his keen appreciation of knowledge and beauty; the Semitic showed itself in his sensitiveness to the imaginative and emotional. Never was prophet-poet of the ancient Hebrews possessed by a more vivid sense of a divine personality. Soar far aloft with him as Bertie would on his voyages while yet a child, or afterwards when as a lad he had become an adept unsurpassed in the management of his beloved "Ariel," and mounted by himself to regions of air inaccessible to others, even the most daring, his foster-father owned himself startled at the boy's absolute inability to comprehend the feeling of loneliness. Sometimes he seemed as if he held commune with beings palpable only to himself. But Bertie, while he watched and wondered, respected the individuality of the child's manifest genius, and therefore abstained from any remark that might chill his spirit, and throw him back upon himself.

When permitted to make ascents by himself it was Criss's delight to shoot rapidly up to a great height, and there remain almost stationary, like an eagle poised on outspread wings, without help from his propelling apparatus. Here he could re-

main floating about on his parachute. The perfection which he soon attained in the use of this appliance was so great as to relieve Bertie of any misapprehension on the score of accident. His parachute was one of the flat kind, so difficult to master, but so admirable in its action when mastered. It would almost float on the air by itself when expanded; and Criss, who was slenderly built, of moderate stature, and a wonderfully active and wiry frame, was able by its aid alone to raise himself from the ground and remain in the air for a considerable time. Indeed to fly, seemed to be almost as instinctive with him as with the birds; and it was one of the prettiest sights to see him, quietly and without apparent effort, soaring aloft in the clear blue, sustained by the white expanded wings of his parachute, with a crowd of birds flocking round him, and seeming to recognize him as of their own order.

As he grew up he was allowed to have for his own a rocket-spiral machine of the most perfect make that the skill of Avenil could devise and his own fortune purchase. This was worked by the power long ago discovered, but for the secret of whose practical application our ancestors for generations sighed and toiled. Their mistake consisted, not in their conception of the potentialities of the magnetic coil, but in supposing that the power produced was only in proportion to the amount of the chemical and metallic elements consumed. It was the discovery that these agents are but a necessary initiative, and that the power is capable of almost indefinite enlargement without a corresponding increase in their consumption, but merely by bringing other and more subtle elements into coöperation, that has made possible all our modern mechanical developments.

So naturally did Criss take to flying, that it needed no laborious instilment of the formulæ respecting the relations of atmospheric pressure to falling bodies, to produce the confidence indispensable to the exercise of the art. The ancient hymn, "Heaven is my home," had for him from the first a peculiar and literal significance.

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Bertie was long profoundly affected by the loss of the wife he had so curiously acquired; and partly under the influence of this feeling, partly for the sake of a more bracing air for Criss, he removed his head-quarters from the Triangle to a cottage on the Surrey hills, situated near the new town which was then rapidly springing up. It was here, where, except on one side, there was scarce a tree or impediment for miles, that Criss made his first essays, and acquired his chief skill in aërostation and aëronautics. Had Alma lived, and their home continued to be in the city, it would scarcely have been possible for Criss to become what he was; and had his lot fallen in a wooded country, it would have been equally impossible. We have here an illustration of the apparent fortuity of the events which dictate fate. An open down, and a convenient starting point in the shape of an old chalk quarry, from whose brink he could take his first flights, were the leading agents in the formation of his career.

His skill once acquired in the country, its exercise was not interfered with by a return to town. Every house-top afforded him a resting-place, and it was one of his chief amusements to pass, sustained by his parachute alone, from one street to another, without ever descending lower than the roofs, but merely touching them lightly in order to spring from them onwards.

We in our days are so accustomed to things as we have them, that we are apt to forget they were not always so. There was a time when the roofs of their houses were as strange and mysterious to the inmates, as the interior of the earth on which they stood. But, the practice of aëronautics, and the substitution of magnetism for coal in the production of heat, combined to bring about a great revolution in our architecture and habits, and affected even our system of jurisprudence. For it was found necessary, in the interests of that privacy which is essential to the development of the character and affections, to secure our interiors from the observation of impertinent aërialists, by making certain changes in our window system, and

also to add certain stringent provisions to the laws relating to libel and slander. The most effective of these provisions was one that was in direct opposition to the enactment of our ancestors. There was a period when they suffered the libeller to go free on pleading justification and sustaining his plea by proof of its truth. We, on the contrary, treat such a plea as an aggravation of the original offense, and punish it accordingly.

But what would our ancestors have said, could they have seen the London of to-day, on a fine evening! The growing scarcity of coal once deplored by them as the commencement of Britain's decline and downfall, proved in reality its greatest blessing, through the impulse it gave to scientific research and the discovery of substitutes. Not to dwell upon the mechanical and economical gains thus effected, I will mention only the gain in comfort and health. Who now that sees our flat and commodious roofs, with their friendly gatherings, and elegant adornments, can realize the time when for an aërialist to pass over a large town, at a moderate height, would have been to court destruction by suffocation! For then every house was a volcano, and every chimney a crater, in a state of perpetual eruption, vomiting forth fire and smoke that made the atmosphere lurid, and loaded it with darkness and poison. Now, the roofs of our houses are the favorite resort of invalids, where the freshest air and the quietest repose are to be found, and not a "London black," once so proverbial, comes to soil their garments. Instead of seeking pure air in the country, as people used to do, such is the perfection to which sanitary science has been brought in our time, that invalids leave the country to seek the purer air of the town. The abolition of coal-gas for the purpose of lighting has much to do with this. So brilliant, now, are our towns at night, that in many a house little extra light is needed beyond that which comes from without. Many a pleasant acquaintance did Criss make in his town sallies over the roofs, and many a sick person learnt to watch eagerly for his bright look and cheerful converse.

Whether dwelling in town or country, the scholastic part of

Criss's education was carried on with the utmost care, under the admirable National School system for which our country has now for a long time been noted. It was, indeed, a happy day for England, when her people determined to throw all public endowments of Church and School into one common fund, and apply it on a consistent and homogeneous system to the cultivation of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual faculties of the whole people, in a manner neither coldly secular nor harshly sectarian.

The steps whereby the country arrived at a solution of that once famous *Religious Difficulty,* by which our unhappy ancestors suffered themselves to be rent and divided into hostile factions, to the utter destruction of all patriotic impulses; and the part played by that *Difficulty* in ultimately promoting the establishment of an uniform Canon of Reference, for the solution of all questions requiring to be solved, I may have occasion, later on, to give some account. They form part of the larger history of the great movement which we know as "The Emancipation," a movement which constituted the crown and completion of the still more ancient "Reformation." A great result often springs from a mean-looking germ. It was the cost of the original "School-board" system, that led the overburdened rate-payers to look about for means of relief. These were ultimately found in the enormous and ill-applied resources of the National Church Establishment.

Under the perfect organization of the National School system, Christmas Carol was able to take his place in the classes of whatever school chanced to be near him. Thus he could equally pursue his studies when dwelling at "Ariel Cottage" with Bertie, or with his other friends in the Triangle. In his case, as is usual now-a-days for the youth of all classes, the school-life was combined with the home-life, both being universally regarded as essential to right education. For we have got rid of the old system, under which children were in childhood relegated to the care of illiterate and ill-bred domestics, and in youth banished for months together to establishments where their parents could exercise no supervision over their progress or associations.

We have got rid also of the system which recognized and fixed a broad distinction between classes. All now are taught in the same institutions; the only differences being such as are rendered needful by the different vocations they are intended to follow.

Avenil, Bertie, and my grandfather, as well as their relations male and female, were educated in these schools. My father's premature death led to my being deprived of the same advantage, to my irreparable loss. The adoption of this system of united instruction for all classes was accompanied by an access of patriotic enthusiasm, such as has rarely occurred in the history of our country. The class antagonisms and differences out of which had grown so many of our social difficulties, at once fell to a vanishing point. England's rich and poor ceased to constitute two hostile nations. It is recorded that the education of the poor was never efficiently administered until the rich determined to avail themselves of the National Schools for their own children.

The mechanism of the system was contrived not merely to allow, but to encourage, the development of individual character and opinion on the part of the scholars. While inculcating *methods* rather than *results*, it trained each individual to refer all questions, neither to authority nor to tradition, but to the criterion of his own carefully cultivated intelligence and moral sense. To develop, not repress, the faculty of thinking, was now the object of education; and this with girls as well as boys! The inculcation of opinions based upon mere authority, and bearing no relation to evidence or utility, was reckoned immoral.

The "Religious Difficulty" had been solved by the substitution of careful definitions for the old harassing dogmas. Church and School, representing severally the development of the religious and the intellectual faculties, were able to unite upon the basis of the axiom, that—

As in the region of Morals the Divine Will can never conflict with the Moral law; so, in the region of Physics, the Divine Will can never conflict with the Natural law.

Whatever may have been the mental capacity of primitive man, it has been found that under its modern development the human mind is unable to conceive of universal law as proceeding from any source short of the Divine, that is, the supreme all-pervading creative energy of the Universe. And we find it to be equally impossible for us to regard as Divine a will or law that is variable and self-contradictory. So that, did we find a conflict occurring between Law and Will, we should necessarily and involuntarily determine that one or the other was not entitled to be regarded as Divine.

This axiom or definition is not a "dogma," inasmuch as it does not claim to be true independently of reason and evidence. It is a necessary basis of consciousness. We cannot conceive of the opposite of it being true, any more than we can conceive of Space as limited, or Time as terminable.

The close and affectionate relations maintained between his fellow-guardians, secured for Criss all the advantages of a home and society whenever Bertie's avocation took him to a distance. Whether in the private dwelling and working rooms of the Avenils and Wilmers, or in the common salon of the Triangle, Criss was always warmly received as a favorite member of the coterie. Ofttimes when left by himself in the cottage on the downs, to follow his studies in Bertie's absence, he would telegraph to his friends at the Triangle (for all the members have a private wire between the club and their country houses,) telling them that he was coming to spend the evening with them, and asking them to have tea on the roof, when he would alight among them in his car.

The extent of the boy's wealth was kept a secret among his trustees, but his character and history made him a constant subject of interest, and his friends delighted to draw him out on matters which excited his attention. As affording a glimpse of his life at this time, as also of those with whom he was connected, the following letter of the elder Mrs. Avenil to my grandmother will be read with interest—

* * * * * * *

"Criss was to join us a few evenings back on the roof of the Triangle, and as he was late, we looked out for him. Some of us thought we had caught sight of the Ariel's light over one of the poorest parts of the city, but it remained there so long that we concluded we were mistaken. When at length he dropped among us, he said in reply to our questionings, that he had lingered in that neighborhood as one that always had a special attraction for him. My son Charles exclaimed at this, and asked what he could want in the very worst part of London.

"The boy looked surprised and puzzled, and then said—

"'Why *worst?* what do you mean by *worst?*'

"'I mean,' said Charles, 'that it is inhabited by the poorest and most vicious classes.'

"'Poor, yes; but what is *vicious?*' asked the child.

"'Now, Mr. Wilmer,' said Charles, 'here's a chance for you.'

"'Nay,' replied Mr. Wilmer, 'surely your twenty-seven years are competent to instruct his ten. Let us hear your definition.'

"'I have not kept up my Morals since I left school,' said Charles, 'as I have been so much occupied with Mathematics; but if I remember aright, we used to define vice as a course of conduct produced by a defect in the faculty of sympathy, so that vice means selfishness, or the practice of self-indulgence to the detriment of others.'

"'If that be it, you have used the wrong word, Master Charles, dear,' cried little Criss with vivacity: 'for it is just because I find so much sympathy, and therefore so little selfishness or vice, among those poor people, that I delight to drop down among them.'

"'But you hate squalor and ugliness, I know,' returned Charles, 'and admire every beautiful thing you see, in building and landscape.'

"'Yes, yes, that is quite true,' pleaded the child, 'and I do not know quite how it is; but—' and here his voice sank and faltered a little, 'it always seems to me that directly something living and human appears, all my interest and sense of beauty

centres in that. I never see ugliness in those districts; for I see poor people helping each other in their struggles for a living. I see poor mothers tending their own children, instead of leaving them to servants, as some of the very rich do: and poor husbands and wives nursing each other in sickness, instead of sending for a hospital nurse.'

"'And pray, how do you see these things?' asked Charles. 'I hope you don't go and look in the windows?'

"'I don't know how I see them,' the child answered, thoughtfully. 'I seem to myself sometimes, when I am passing over a dwelling, to be as well aware of all that is going on inside as if I saw it with my bodily eyes. Perhaps it is by means of that same sympathy, the absence of which, you say, is the cause of vice.'

"Here I made a sign to Charles that he should not lead the child on to talk in this direction: for we have often observed in him symptoms of a belief that he possesses some occult faculty, which makes him different in kind from other folk. A notion of this kind is often but a germ of insanity, and requires careful management to eradicate it, the most essential point being to supply plenty of occupation in another direction, and allow it to die of inanition by never encouraging or even heeding it. The sympathetic faculty exists in him to an extent altogether extraordinary, and unless its growth be judiciously repressed, and kept proportionate to other sides of his nature, we shall have reason to be anxious about the excesses to which it will carry him when he comes into the very considerable fortune which I understand will be his. Bertie Greathead insists on his being kept in ignorance of his prospects while his education is going on. No doubt it would injure the character of any ordinary youth to be brought up to regard himself as independent of parents or guardians, for such sense of dependence plays an important part in the development of our best feelings. But Crissy is not as other children. The affections are already too predominant in him. He is capable of sacrificing himself to any extent. Their development needs precisely such a check as would be given by the knowledge of

his own independence. It would give him a more practical turn. Admirably as he has learnt the theory and practice of aëronautics, there is in him far too great a predominance of the contemplative and subjective element. It is true that, when excited and eager in his talk, his wonderful eyes shine out upon his audience with startling brilliancy and suggestiveness; but when in repose, his gaze is manifestly turned inwards, as if *there* lay the real absorbing topic of his soul; and he has a singular passion for being alone, a passion which grows upon him. Already his favorite reading is, not in the literature of our own day, but in such ancient writings as the Hebrew Psalms, and the Gospels, and the curious old English poem called 'In Memoriam.' We who have learnt to discern the real significance of the Beautiful Life, cannot but feel uneasy at the proclivity thus shown towards sentimental contemplation by one so endowed and so young. All are not eagles to gaze with impunity upon the sun. I know there are some points upon which you and I do not coincide, but I shall be glad to know how your motherly heart judges this dear child and his bringing up."

The district to which reference was made in the conversation of which the foregoing letter records the commencement, is mainly inhabited by that large class of operatives, who are disqualified for being co-operatives. As all my home readers must be aware, the great mechanical trades and industries of the country are in the hands of large bodies of artisans, male or female, who are associated together for their own exclusive mutual benefit, except in the cases in which they are allied with outside capitalists. Much of the land is similarly held; and the workers divide among themselves all the profit of their work, employing as managers and secretaries, men or women, of high education and social position, whom they pay liberally. The members of these associations and their families are all well to do, and run little risk of poverty from lack of work, while they have reduced the risk from natural causes to a minimum. For not merely have the members of the various trades, by

breeding in and in among themselves, acquired an hereditary aptitude for their work, but they are careful to obtain the finest specimens of women to be the mothers of their children, so that incapacity, mental or physical, is scarcely known among them. There is thus no longer a perpetual drafting off from these classes of the best looking girls to recruit the ranks of wealthy vice and dissipation, and no leaving to the working man only the poorest types of womanhood from which to choose his wife. It is therefore outside of the ranks of the co-operative, that the pinch of pauperism is found. To be qualified for membership, a man or woman must be up to a certain working power. Those who are above this standard are at liberty to remain aloof and work independently, making if they can, larger wages than are to be got in the association, but at their own risk in case of illness or failure through other causes. Owing to the advantages in the shape of capital and machinery at the command of the associations, few do this except in those higher branches of art-labor, where individual genius finds scope for its exercise. The great bulk of the outsiders are excluded by reason of their inability to come up to the mark required, as regards either the quality or the quantity of their work.

I mention this as I do not wish to appear to claim for our civilization that it has already attained a condition so perfect as to be incompatible with the evil of pauperism. The principle followed by our artisan classes is still the principle inaugurated and insisted on by the church in bygone ages. As the church utterly disregarded human individuality in respect of the nature and operations of the mind, so the co-operative labor associations disregard it in respect of man's powers of physical work. The church doomed its heretics to dire condemnation here or hereafter. The co-operatives doom all artisans who are unable to comply with their arbitrary standard, to the dire pangs of poverty. The progress of enlightenment, by removing the shackles placed by the church upon thought, has emancipated mind from its slavery. A further progress will similarly enlarge the conditions of co-operative labor until all classes of

workers can be included without the sacrifice of individual differences. The old restricted church maintained its authority by force. The old trades-unions, adopting the ecclesiastical method, also used force. Like the church, too, they rejected the principle of nationality, and set up their caste against the state. These things are not so now. Individualism, or the rights of the man, had to struggle long and hard against the fanaticism of organization, ecclesiastical or communistic. The helpless Celt had succumbed to the tyranny for ever, but for the indomitable energy of the self-reliant Anglo-Saxon, who taught him what freedom meant. Such advance have we made. But the end is not yet. The fold is not yet capacious enough to contain all the sheep. But time will accomplish even this. The curious part of it is that the artisans, even while following the old ecclesiastical principle in this respect, profess the greatest hatred of the old ecclesiastical regime. Such is the vitality of the system which dates from old Rome :—Rome that was for ever forcing its law upon men whether they would or not.

CHAPTER IX.

In their anxiety to do the very best for their charge, the scientific Avenils and the æsthetic Wilmers held many a consultation with Bertie Greathead. Under the term æsthetic I include the whole range of subjects which appeal to the emotions. It was to my grandmother's strong religious feeling that Mrs. Avenil alluded in the closing sentence of her letter. The family temperament, which in her and in my mother took the form of devotion, took in my father the poetic—and in myself the art—direction. My father had married his cousin, and after his death, which occurred in my childhood, my mother, under the influence of my grandmother, abandoned herself utterly to the sway of their dominant sentiments. They with-

drew altogether from their old associations, and buried themselves and me in the dwindling but tenacious sect of religionists, who, as representing the church prior to the Emancipation, assume to themselves the title of *The Remnant*. This, however, came after the time with which we are now concerned.

One day the conversation about Criss was commenced by Bertie referring to the boy's talk with his schoolfellows about the things he was in the habit of seeing and hearing when aloft in his car. Bertie confessed himself unable to determine whether his utterances respecting another world of intelligent beings proceeded from any fixed or definite conviction, but many of his schoolfellows thought that he believed in something akin to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and held the upper air to be inhabited by *angels*, who met and conversed with him.

"Does he think that he finds albumen and life-plasm up there?" asked the younger Avenil, with a laugh.

"I understand that he calls them *angels*, but does not profess to know what they are made of," said Bertie, drily. "He has sufficient scientific comprehension to avoid assuming a distinction in kind between the entities of matter and spirit. It was to a conversation he had with some of his schoolfellows on this point that I was about to refer in disproof of Mr. Avenil's notion of his unpractical character."

"Surely the other boys ridicule him when he speaks to them of such things?"

"Far from it," replied Bertie. "They have too much reverence for the earnestness and simplicity of his character to let any irony appear. The only time he ever manifested impatience was at first, when they assumed as a matter of course, that he took for realities the products of his own imagination. On this occasion he told them that the beings of whom he spoke were as real to him as his own schoolfellows. They had been tending some pet animals, which Criss allowed some of his schoolfellows to keep in the cottage garden. One of the boys had said that it would be a very dull and stupid world if all the living creatures had developed into human beings. And an-

other said it would be duller still if all the human beings were grown-up men and women, without any boys or girls. And a third said that people used to fancy one yet more dull than that, for they imagined heaven as peopled with beings who were all alike, and had no difference even of sex. Then the first speaker turned suddenly to Criss, and exclaimed,—

"'Carol can tell us all about it. Carol, are there any animals in heaven?'

"'You know our bargain,' was his reply. 'If you want me to tell you about the Above, you must first sing my favorite song for me.'

"'Yes! yes! the balloon song! the balloon song!' cried a number of little ones, hastening to range themselves before him, as he seated himself on a grass-covered mound. And then the little voices burst with tremendous energy into the old nursery rhyme, which dates from the days when men could mount into the air only by tying themselves to a huge bag of gas.*

*It may not be worth preserving for its own sake—what nursery rhyme is? But time is only too ready to drop things into oblivion; so here it is.

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
Go up and hunt the sky,
Then come and tell us soon
What you have found on high.

So many things we want to know,
We cannot see down here:
Where hides the sun when day is done,
Where goes the dried-up tear.
And when our laughter dies away,
Who stores it up for future day.

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
Tell us of what the stars are made,
What are their children like?
We're always told they're good as gold,
And never sulk or strike.
But ar'n't they often giddy found,
With always rolling round and round?

"'Now what is it you want to know?' he asked, when they had finished.

"'If there are any animals in heaven.'

"'Certainly there are,' he replied, with the utmost seriousness. 'One of the principal delights of the angels is in tenderly tending them. They regard them as incipient intelligences of higher natures, and only a few steps below their own children.'

"'And are there any baby angels?' inquired a little girl. She was sister of the lad who had spoken first, and listened with awe to his account of the Above.

"'Certainly,' he said; 'why not? Would not this be a very poor world were there nothing but grown men and women in it, no tiresome children, no beautiful birds, no noble horses, no sleek cats, no dear, affectionate dogs? Ah, they are not worse off up there than we are down here, you may be sure.'

"One of the older boys here asked him whether the beings he spoke of possess any specific gravity, or are altogether independent of gravitation.

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
What makes the thunder peal?
Where are the old gods gone?
We like to think 'tis they who drink
The clouds when rain is done.
But don't you often quake with fright
So far from earth to be at night?

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
We know what you have got to say,
You've told us oft before:
That if would we the old gods see,
We must our best adore:
And shines the sun, perpetual day,
'Tis only we who turn away.

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon
Go up and hunt the sky;
Then come and tell us soon
What you have found on high.

"He replied that doubtless they vary from us in density and weight, as they live at so different an elevation in the atmosphere; and that in some respects they hold the same position towards us as fishes of the sea, inasmuch as they do not require a solid element to rest upon, and can sustain themselves at different elevations. They inhabit mainly, he said, the junction of the atmosphere with space, and breathe the pure ether of the latter; but are endowed with an apparatus whereby they can secrete the fluid necessary for breathing when they wish to descend into the atmosphere. He delighted, he said, to note the resemblances between things there and here.

"One of the lads said he supposed that every one was much more perfect up there than in this world. To this Criss said:

"'I do not understand. What do you mean by more perfect? All God's worlds must be perfect.'

"'But not the people in them?' suggested one.

"'Hush, hush,' exclaimed Criss, 'we cannot call anything imperfect unless we know the end it was designed to fulfil, and that it falls short of fulfilling that end.'

"'He talks as if they were all real for him,' said another. 'Come, Carol, tell us, do you ever use the clouds as a bed, and go to sleep and dream when you are lying on them?'

"'Oh, yes, often and often,' he returned; 'but these things are as real for me as you all are. Call them what you will, they are forces external to myself, and which make me conscious of their existence by operating upon my senses just as you yourselves do. Please do not call their existence into question. Fancy my having to try hard to persuade them of the existence of you my schoolfellows! It would seem just as absurd to me; and they have too much sense to require it. Surely it is but a barren, superfluous sort of talk that consists in our questioning each other's existence. We, too, who have the microscope, telescope, spectroscope, and such things, to make perpetual revelations to us of worlds otherwise invisible! If it seems odd to you that I should have experiences which you have not, you should remember that you have experiences which I have not. The difference between us in this matter is

only such as exists between a man who has an ear for music and one who has none, or one who has a keen eye for colors and one who is color-blind. It is all a question of sensitiveness.' "

Here old Mrs. Wilmer interrupted Bertie's narration to remark that in saying this the boy did nôt do himself justice. He should have adduced the case of his own Israelitish ancestors as a proof that some races are endowed with a vividness of spiritual perception which others are incapable of comprehending.

"I myself heard him," said my father, joining in the conversation, "soon after the trip he made with us to the sea-side, describing to a group of little children some of the games and recreations with which, he said, the angels amuse their leisure hours. You would have thought he was actually gazing upon the scenery of the ideal world, as he described the particulars, so well did he make his audience realize it too. Had I been a painter I could have drawn a picture from his description, so vivid and graphic was it. There were rows above rows of angelic beings, attired in colors undreamt of by our rainbows, ranged along the sides of tall cliffs which, in the form of a vast amphitheatre, overhung an expanse of ether which lay at their feet, and stretched out and melted away in the distance like an illimitable sea. I thought at first he was going to describe something like the scene at Lord's at one of the cricket-contests between our ancient national schools of Harrow and Eton, where the rows upon rows of exquisitely-dressed women ranged round the ground, resemble a circular embankment of beautiful flowers. But he went on to describe this expanse as being of various hues, streaked in some parts with tints of tender blue, and ruffled as if with a light breeze, and in others white and glassy, or of a delicate green, and the whole scene wondrously beautiful even to the eyes of the angelic multitude. But it was not to gaze on a scene of still life that the celestial hosts were thus assembled. Some of the younger angels had been busying themselves in fabricating a number of vessels of various characters and forms, and they and their friends had met to witness a contest of speed between them. Some of those vessels con-

tained ingeniously-devised machinery concealed within them. Others were provided with wide-expanding wings to catch the pulsations of the surrounding ether. And others were impelled by the young angels themselves ranged in ranks upon them, and impelling them by their own physical strength. And now and then during the race would be seen some little craft without visible means of propulsion, making such rapid way as to outstrip all competitors; and then a shout would arise, as the spectators surmised that something unfair was being done; and then from beneath the keel which was hidden in the element, the owner would emerge, shaking the etherial particles from his wings, and making the welkin ripple to his merry laughter, for such method of propulsion was not within the conditions of the contest. I could have gazed long upon the enchanting scene, as he raised it before me; but the bright and happy crowds of the celestial population, and the fairy forms darting over the luminous expanse, were in a moment all dispelled; for one of the youngsters suddenly broke the rapt silence with which we had been listening, by clapping his hands and exclaiming, 'I know! Yachts!' And after this Criss would not utter a syllable further."

It was with considerable impatience that the Avenils had listened to these recitals of Bertie and Wilmer. When they were concluded, Mr. Avenil said to my father—

"We must turn him over to you, Wilmer, to make a poet of him. He will grow up a dreamy and unpractical man, and utterly unable to turn his fortune to good account."

"I think," pleaded Bertie, "the skill he has acquired as an aërialist, indicates a sufficiently practical turn for all useful purposes."

"You aëronauts," returned Mr. Avenil, "are too apt to judge the affairs of earth by those of the air. You know little of anything more substantial than the currents of wind and differences of atmospheric density and temperatures. Yours is a pursuit that generates a disposition to drift rather than to act."

Bertie laughed heartily at the idea of depreciating his voca-

tion upon moral grounds; and remarked that those who know what it is to drive an aëromotive at the rate of a hundred and fifty miles or more an hour, through mist and darkness and tempest, cleaving the ice-cloud, and dodging the lightning, would hardly recognize the criticism as founded in justice. He added, that he, too, should be glad to see the boy in training for some definite career.

"A rich man," remarked Mr. Avenil, "ought to find his occupation in the employment of his wealth. An income derived from investments, which require no care on the part of the owner, tends to make a man a mere desultory vagabond, unless he have some strong bias of his own to direct him. I should like to see young Carol, as the proprietor of a large landed estate, devoting his money to the improvement of agriculture, by the application of science in all its available branches."

"You read Poet in his every word and expression," said Wilmer, "and would turn the Poet into a Farmer!"

"He certainly is an enthusiast," said the younger Avenil, "but his enthusiasm takes anything but an analytic turn. His marvellous aptitude for languages, coupled with his locomotive propensities, convinces me that he will find his chief engrossments among men rather than among things."

There was good ground for Charles's remark. Criss had availed himself of the advantages afforded in the National Schools, to attain a facility of expression in many languages, which enabled him to converse freely with the nations of the various countries he had visited with Bertie; particularly the Arabic, which, for his origin's sake, Bertie had urged upon him. Bertie said that the boy seemed to acquire them almost by sheer force of sympathy. It was a heart—not a head—faculty. The possession of it would be sure to encourage his love of travel.

My father suggested that it was only part of the larger faculty of expression. The boy possessed language and insight. Travel would give him information and ideas. He ought then to turn his leisure to account as an author.

The elder Avenil demurred to this.

"The world and science," he said, "are the same everywhere; so that time spent in travel is for the most part time wasted. Accustom him to regard a piece of land as his own,—no matter whether he cultivates it or builds a town upon it,—and he will soon learn to love it, and devote himself to its improvement."

"The boy is a bird—a bird of passage; and you would chain him to a clod!" exclaimed Bertie.

"The boy is an Israelite and a poet, and may be a prophet," said my grandmother, of hieropathic tendencies. "You are all thinking of the material, and forgetting the spiritual. Put him, with all his endowments of soul and body, into the land of his forefathers, and who knows but that he may successfully devote himself to reviving the ancient glories of his race, so long overshadowed by its lust for gold. Though restored to the Holy Land, Israel has yet to be restored to the Divine favor. You may deem me superstitious, but there is something in his connection with those jewels, as well as in himself, that to me bespeaks him of royal destiny. You were quite right to make him learn Arabic, Bertie."

They were all struck by this remark, coming as it did from one who dwelt apart from the world of the present, in a region of exalted sentiment, absorbed in theological studies, and making her chief companions the Sacred books of the ancient religions. Unobservant, however, and indifferent, as she was in regard to things around her, there was one portion of the earth that was ever present to her mind, with an overwhelming interest. It was Judæa, the ever memorable *Holy Land.* In much the same way, as the religious system once known as *Romanism* was long kept alive by its offspring and supplanter *Protestantism,* so was Judaism kept alive by Christianity long after it would otherwise have perished by natural decay.

The prophecies of the ancient Jewish patriot poets respecting the future resuscitation of their country's greatness had taken deep hold of old Mrs. Wilmer's mind, and she had viewed with exultation the return of the Jews to Palestine, and the vast influx of wealth and power with them into that country, under the commercial influences of the Suez Canal,

the Euphrates railroads, and the constitution of the Empire of Soudan or Central Africa.

The whole of the circumstances attending the restoration were unusual. The financial embarrassments of the decayed Moslem Empire had led to the sale of Palestine to a company of Jewish capitalists. The purchasers had little difficulty in acting upon the patriotism and commercial eagerness of their people, and inducing large numbers of wealthy houses to migrate thither, or at least to establish branch houses in the capital. The barren places in the surrounding districts were replenished with rich earth brought by sea from the Egyptian Delta, or the Tufa beds of Vesuvius and Etna, and liberally spread on the terraced hills of the new Jerusalem; and the whole desert tract of the lower Jordan and Dead Sea was filled with water up to the level of the Mediterranean, and made navigable, by a canal cut through the sandy wilderness from El Arish.

The Ancient Court of the Sanhedrim was re-established, but on a purely secular basis, as the nature of the times dictated. By this were the home affairs of the country regulated; its foreign relations being controlled by a committee of the Jerusalem Stock-Exchange, a puissant institution in these days of the almost universal supremacy of wealth.

Powerful and prosperous as the Jewish community in Palestine had become, it wanted yet one thing to complete its ambition. The adjoining countries of Arabia and Syria were willing to withdraw altogether from their allegiance to the Sultan, and unite as one people with the Jews, but they could not abandon their allegiance to the principle of personal government. The expulsion of the Sublime Porte from Constantinople, and its withdrawal from the Golden Gate of the Holy City, had utterly destroyed its prestige with these populations. But these events were themselves the result of causes which are easily traceable to a period so far back as the twentieth or even the nineteenth century. It was then, that the vivacious, brilliant, and long dominant Celtic race had finally succumbed to patient, thorough, and conscientious Teuton. It was then that the

silent, studious German, backed by the moral force of our own Anglo-Saxons at home and in North America, laid the first round of the political edifice of that modern civilization, whose subsequent stages have included the absorption by Germany of Austria proper; the reconstitution of the Sclavonic confederacy, and consequent reduction of Russia within moderate dimensions by the withdrawal of her southern populations; the re-establishment of the "Holy Roman Empire," with Hungary as a royal appanage, in its own ancient capital on the Bosphorus; and the waning of the Turkish dominion, through its inability to retain its hold upon its border provinces.

My elder readers, who have all history, ancient and modern, at their finger-ends, must forgive the recapitulation of these details as not irrelevant to our story.

There was no king in Israel; and a king of Israel was the "roc's egg" of my grandmother's imagination. In such a potentate she saw the sole possible supplanter of the Grand Turk, whom she regarded as the Anti-Christ, the sole symbol of empire powerful enough to draw the peoples surrounding her beloved Jerusalem under the shelter of its wings. And it is not a little remarkable, that what with her was purely a religious sentiment, had become, for astute politicians, a master-key to the solution of the principal remaining Eastern Question. As I have already stated, the populations of those countries retain all their ancient immemorial attachment to the personal principle both in religion and politics. They have not followed the northern races in their recognition of abstract right and wrong apart from the will of an individual. With us, wherever an individual is invested with power, it is for the sake of concentrating vigor and responsibility in a single executive; ourselves, the people, being the beneficiaries and judges. With the semi-Semitic races, on the contrary, the ruler is the master, not the servant, of the people. We have long passed the stage in which people held strong convictions respecting mere forms of government. Together with other dogmas we have got rid of the dogma of monarchy and the dogma of republicanism. Whatever form of government best combines the liberty of the

individual with the general security for any people, is approved of by us. As the genius of races and peoples varies, so will these forms vary. The detail must be a matter of experience for all, not of dogma for any.

We have, thus, learnt to recognize the sanctity of Individuality in Races, as well as in persons. And there was no inconsistency in the statesmen of the great and highly-civilized republics of Europe, America, and Australia desiring to see a monarchy established in the East, having its throne in Jerusalem. The fact that such a result was desired by the leading Jews themselves, who were on the spot, was deemed a very strong argument in its favor; for, trained as they had mostly been, in our free communities and institutions, they were naturally favorable to a continuance of the state of things under which they had flourished, and grown rich enough to re-acquire the land of their forefathers, and raise it to such an eminence among the nations of the earth as it had never before attained or imagined—an eminence based on material wealth. Without a king, however, they were unable to avail themselves of the readiness of the populations inhabiting the regions extending southwards from the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, to make one natiôn with them; for those populations were essentially and intensely anti-democratic. With a king, this object so desirable to us as well as to them, would at once have been accomplished; and we should have had a strong and friendly power to guard our main connections with our allies in India and Japan, and our dependencies in China, on the one side; and on the other, to keep in order the restless and still semi-barbarous empire of Central Africa.

So they were all struck by Mrs. Wilmer's remark. But it was not in the same way that they were struck by it. To Bertie it was simply preposterous.

"My little Criss a king!" he exclaimed. "I am sure that it is no kingdom of this world that he would care to have, any more than a farm. His heart is above the clouds."

"He cannot spend his money there," said Mr. Avenil.

"By the way, have you ever, Mr. Greathead, taken him to the Holy Land in any of your voyages?" asked Mrs. Wilmer.

"Once only," returned Bertie, and then I was so alarmed at the attention his looks attracted, and also at meeting the diamond merchant, that I hurried away without completing the enquiries I was making about his family. I hardly know why, but I have a suspicion that that merchant knew more about the real history of those jewels than he was willing to tell us, and I thought it best to leave well alone. Did I ever tell you that I have seen them since we parted with them?"

"Indeed!"

"It was on the occasion of my going to Bornou, the capital of Central Africa, on a commission connected with the cotton trade, that I was invited to witness a religious ceremonial at the court of His Majesty the Emperor of Soudan. You must know that though the country professes Christianity, the royal family have never abandoned the rite of circumcision. This is inflicted on its members in infancy, the rite of baptism being deferred until the seventh year. The ordinary and orthodox usage on the former occasion, is to bind the principal crown diamonds on the pit of the royal infant's stomach, there to be worn for nine days. The jewels in question are regarded with a peculiar and superstitious reverence, as coming directly from King Solomon, and they are combined in an oval form as a tiara, and called the Talisman of Solomon. But the crown jewels had for several years been missing, and were not forthcoming on the occasion of the first rite being performed on the heir-apparent. It was said that they had recently been recovered, and there was great public rejoicings in consequence; for the people are still excessively superstitious, in spite of their having Christianity and the Bible. And it was determined to rectify the omission at the first ceremony, by using them at the baptism in the same way that they ought to have been used at the circumcision.

"Well, I found that this famous and sacred Talisman of Solomon consisted of no other than the jewels belonging to Criss, and which we had sold for him."

"Curious," observed Mr. Avenil; "I wonder whether it was a lie of the Emperor's, or whether they were really the crown jewels which he had If so, they must have been stolen."

"At any rate," said Bertie, "the Emperor's readiness to give a large sum of money for their recovery, without asking any questions, shows that he had strong misgivings respecting the validity of his own title to them."

"I don't like one remark which you made, Mr. Greathead," said my grandmother. "Instead of saying these people are superstitious in spite of their having Christianity and the Bible, say they are religious owing to their having them."

"I was anticipating a somewhat different remark from you, my dear Mrs. Wilmer," said Mr. Avenil. "I thought you were about to claim the throne of Central Africa, at least, for the lad. At any rate, I hope you all agree with me that this story must be kept from him. It would foster his propensity for dreaming, which to me is really alarming, and one that requires correction by vigorous treatment."

"He must know all when he comes of age," said Mrs. Wilmer, with energy. "His duty and mission in life may depend upon it."

"Well, well," said Mr. Avenil, "whatever the future may contain for him, it is clearly our business to make a man of him first, and not a visionary."

CHAPTER X.

It was no small gratification to Bertie to be able to relate to the Avenils anything concerning his beloved foster-child that might tend to disabuse them of the notion that he was a mere visionary. One possessing Criss's acute sympathy with humanity could not, he thought, be liable to the charge, no matter how he might love to cultivate solitude and meditation in the intervals of his activity. During a holiday absence of the boys, one of the Avenil girls was telling her sisters, how that he had lamented to her the fulness of the world, and wished that he had lived before the modern system of emigration had done so

much towards spreading population everywhere. And another said he acted as if he possessed an extra sense, and one that required for its exercise a total withdrawal from human intercourse.

Bertie happened to call while they were talking, and they at once turned to him, asking—

"Where is he now, Mr. Greathead?"

"Meaning Criss? I scarcely know. I had a message from him a few days ago from the top of Teneriffe, which is one of his favorite perches. He has a friend in the observatory there. There is a wire on the summit, as on most other summits, for the convenience of aërialists, and he generally sends me a message when he alights anywhere."

"Oh, I know," exclaimed one of the girls, "he delights to rest awhile on some high peak, and thence take flight into the air, and return again to it, as a lark to its nest, after being poised aloft. It was a happy inspiration of Mr. Wilmer's which gave him his name, for never did name and nature more closely correspond. However dreamy he may be, he must see many things by moving about so much, which other people miss. He ought to meet with adventures, too. Did he say whither he was going next?"

"Yes, to Algiers to visit a school friend who is son of the British minister there. I have not heard from him since, but I have brought you an Italian paper with an account of an extraordinary rescue of people from destruction by the eruption of Etna, which I, as an aërialist, find exceedingly interesting, and which I thought you might like to see."

"Anything about Criss in it?"

"It is only as I have said."

"Do tell us all about it."

"Well, you must know that for a very long time Etna had been so quiet that a large population had come gradually to settle upon its slopes, thinking the days of its activity were over. Last week, however, a tremendous eruption rent the mountain in various places, and there poured out torrents of lava, which, meeting below one of the most thickly peopled

slopes, completely cut off the escape of the inhabitants. The Italian Government sent its best aërialists to try and extricate them, but these, after many and disastrous attempts to pass the barrier of intense heat, and alight exactly upon the very limited area available, were compelled to desist; and then from within the flaming circle, from the wretches doomed to be burnt or starved to death, and from their sympathizing but helpless comrades without, went up a cry of agony, which, as you know, has rung through all the wires of the world, appealing for aid. I and others of my craft were on the point of starting to see what we could do, when a telegram came to say that the rescue had been effected. I have now got the details, and as I consider them a whole bunch of feathers in the cap of aërialism, I have come to glorify my calling and its professors among my friends.

"It appears that at the moment when despair was at its height, an aërialist whose approach had been unperceived, alighted in the terror-stricken crowd, and signified his readiness and ability to save them, one at a time. The peasants, who are still as much a parcel of children as they were five or ten thousand years ago, rushed upon him, determined to be saved all at once. Seeing that their violence would be the destruction of himself and his machine, as well as of themselves also, he dexterously disengaged himself, and leaping aloft out of their reach, was lost to their view in the smoke of the burning mountain. On hearing their renewed wail of despair, he presently returned towards them, and hailing them, said he hoped now that they would do as they were told, and not attempt to get into the car again. He then stopped a few yards over their heads, and bade them depute one of their number to hold parley with him, the rest keeping at a distance. Luckily their padre was with them,—it is he who has given the account,—and it was under his influence that the stipulations of the aërialist were observed. The important question who should go first, was settled in favor of the children. The aërialist said he could carry two of these at once; so the padre brought two children himself, and placed them in the car, for

he could not trust the mothers to obey the orders given. He describes it as a moment of agonizing anxiety when the car arose with its first load, and disappeared in the smoke. But not a voice ventured to utter a sound. Presently, however, there arose from the multitudes who were assembled on the outside of the ring of fire, a cry and a shout of joy which told those within of the safe and unexpected arrival of the car and its contents. All was delirious delight for a moment, and then came an interval of suspense. But soon the car returned and carried off more children; and then the aged and infirm, and then the able bodied, the good padre himself being reserved for the last, the lava having by this time approached so near that a little delay would have rendered his escape impossible. The rescue had occupied all the day and a part of the night, though much time had been saved by the plan of suspending a large basket beneath the car in which the passengers were carried. But it was not, and could not be intermitted until completed, though it must have tasked the endurance of the aërialist and the powers of his machine to the utmost."

"You haven't told us who he was," said Avenil, who had entered during the relation. "Was he an Italian?"

"Ah, that is one of the strangest parts of the story," said Bertie. "When the people had done congratulating themselves and each other, they bethought themselves of their deliverer: but on searching for him he was nowhere to be found. The Government has advertised the thanks of the nation to the unknown aërialist, and offered to make any acknowledgment of his services in its power."

"Do you know any professional likely to have done it?"

"I know none who has an aëromotive corresponding with the description of this one; and it is not like a professional to think of concealing himself after doing a piece of business. I suspect it was some accomplished amateur, though I know of but one in the world capable of the feat."

"Could it have been Criss?"

"Here he comes to speak for himself," exclaimed one of the girls, who was looking out of the window. And presently the Ariel alighted on the broad verandah, and Criss entered.

But to all the questions with which they assailed him, he said only that he had hoped to escape being found out, and that the reason of his delay in returning was that he was so exhausted with the job that he had hurried off the moment he had let go the padre and the basket, and slept for twenty-four hours in a secluded nook on the opposite side of the mountain.

"Well, there is an Italian countship waiting for you whenever you choose to come out of your shell and claim it," said Bertie.

"Count Carol sounds charmingly," exclaimed the girls. "You may find it of immense use when you fall in love. A woman likes to be called *Countess*."

"Not a woman of much account, though, I suspect," returned Criss, making his first and last joke, as he disappeared and went to his own room.

. "There, girls," said Avenil to his younger sisters after Criss was gone. "You see, a woman who wants to catch him will have to be on her best behavior. By the way, has he ever shown any signs of falling in love, any preferences for any of your sweet sex?"

"Never," said the youngest, Bessy Avenil, a blooming, practically-disposed damsel of nearly Criss's own age, now about seventeen. "And I believe he would need a good shaking to bring him to the point; or, rather, that a woman would have to do the proposing herself. But I don't believe it is 'goodness' that will win him; at least, not if opposites have the most attraction for each other."

"At any rate he won't find his duplicate," said another, who was a little older. "My belief is that he will be better single, for he is just one to expect so much that he will always be disappointed with what he finds to be really the case. He seems to me like one of those men who in old times women would have thought it a sacrilege to love."

"At any rate," added Avenil, "he was now proved himself to be something more than a visionary; so let us hope that this adventure will develop his practical side."

"Meaning his matrimonial?" asked Bessie.

'Do you know," said Bertie to Avenil, "that I think you carry your aversion to the contemplative to an extreme."

"Call it rather the unpractical speculative," replied Avenil. "The world's whole history down nearly to our own time has been little else than one long martyrdom, in which man has sacrificed himself at the altar of his own unverifiable phantasies. Ours is the first millennium of the Emancipation. It is the product of that scientific spirit, which refuses to divorce belief from knowledge. It is not that I find dear Criss's disposition aught but of the noblest, but that I fear the indulgence of that style of thought may lead to his sympathizing rather with the world's ancient worst than with its modern best."

"You know a good deal about his education," said Bertie; "have you found him defective in his views of history?"

"No, far from it. The professor of history at his school told me the boy's sympathies, as shewn in his essays, were invariably of the widest and most radically catholic kind."

"And in chemistry, which you yourself undertook to teach him?"

"Ah, there is an illustration of what I mean. He applied himself to that with wonderful assiduity and success, making himself in a short time a complete master of chemical analysis. Then he suddenly dropped it; and on my enquiring the reason, said that it would not take him where he wanted to go, inasmuch as it failed to discover the universal entity that underlies all phenomena. It was not processes or stages that he cared for, but the ultimate analysis of things, whereby he could resolve the various material substances into their prime element. 'Is it past finding out, Avenil dear?' he cried, his eyes glistening with eagerness, as if his whole heart lay in discovering for himself what men call God. 'Of course I told him that it is past finding out by chemistry.

"'But it must be there, and must be homogeneous!' he cried, with the same eager manner. 'If it is not homogeneous, it is not God. I cannot think of God as made up of substances eternally and essentially different.' And he went on to declare

that if the crucible failed to carrry analysis back to the stage where all things meet, and to reveal to him the universal Substance or essential spirit of things, he should exchange the crucible of the chemist for the crucible of his own mind, and continue the search there.

"Considering it a perilous temperament that prompts the longing to merge one's individuality in the inscrutable universal,—for what else is the Nirvana of the Buddhist?—I endeavored to check his indulgence of it by saying that as our faculties, being themselves phenomenal, cannot transcend phenomena, it is clearly our duty to rest content with phenomena, and not seek to trespass upon forbidden ground. He asked what the penalty is for making the attempt. I told him a wasted life, fatuity, and oftimes madness, as the history of the world amply showed. And I spoke seriously, as I wished to impress him with a sense of the danger he runs through indulging his theistic tendencies. But he laughed, and said with that winning way he has,—

"'Dear Master Avenil, if I were made so, no doubt I should be able to remain content with mere phenomena, without seeking to know what it is that appears in and through them. But I feel that I am not made so. Suppose me, then, to be a bit of the universe, a conscious particle of the great whole, would you have me balk my longing to recognize, and be recognized of, the whole of which I am a part? Nay, supposing the theory which you favor to be correct, and that it is only in our consciousness that the Universe attains self-consciousness, would you forbid Nature such crowning satisfaction as it may attain through my consciousness?'

"What could I say? Bertie, what would you have said?"

"If the longing be genuine, fulfil your nature, only do not cultivate fancy to the neglect of experience."

"Well, that is very much what I contrived to say, and the boy cried, 'Ah, that is just as my own dear wise Bertie would have spoken.'

"He added, too, that even if madness be the penalty for presuming to endeavor to penetrate the unfathomable, it was a

penalty that was quite as likely to overtake him if he refused his nature full liberty of exploration. I suspect that his habits of physical discursiveness have something to do with this mental characteristic."

"You know his favorite motto, which he inscribes in his most private entries?" asked Bertie.

"No, what is it?"

"A text from Scripture, 'One with God.'"

Avenil sighed, for he really loved the lad.

CHAPTER XI.

The women of the Avenil family, both for their connection with Criss, and as types of a dominant class, deserve a special chapter to themselves. Although by describing our recent social developments and the steps whereby our national church was brought into accord with them, I may delay my story, my readers must not think that I am digressing from the main purpose of my book. The connection may not be at once obvious, but neither in these fortunate days is the special connection obvious between the church and the female part of the community. It was not so in the times to which I shall have to recur in order to make my story, as a story of the day should be, an index to the manners of the age.

I wish that it came within my scope fully to delineate the characters of old Mr. and Mrs. Avenil, who disappear from the scene about the time at which we have arrived. It is only permitted to me to say that they died as they had lived, contentedly resigned to the operation of the laws of that Nature which had ever been the subject of their deepest study. United, in harmony with the dictates of their consciences, in a marriage of the third class, and therefore trusting solely to their own sense of mutual fitness and sympathy for the continuance of their association, no cloud had ever intervened between them

and the full sunshine of their happiness. Hand in hand they lived and loved and worked, trusting to their respect for the physical laws of life to find its due issue in the development of their moral natures. So they passed through life cheerful, reliant, and self-sustaining, emulating in their own method the consummate ease and enchanting rhythm of the order of the universe; keenly enjoying in their heyday the rewards reaped of knowledge and obedience, and, in their decline, still finding pleasure in tracing and recognizing the inevitable sequence of the steps which marked their decay. To the very last, their delight in studying the phenomena of the present, made them indifferent to those of the past or future. Neither regret nor hope found a place in their minds. Wherever is existence, they said, we shall find something worthy to be studied. Whatever lasts as long as we do is sufficient for us. Anticipation serves only to spoil the actual. Anxiety about the future implies dissatisfaction with the present. Such was their religion, a term surely not misapplied, though devoid of that yearning towards a personified ideal which constitutes *spirituality*.

They left a large and distinguished family to inherit a temperament in which the intellectual faculties dominated to the exclusion of the spiritual. For they held it as an axiom that the spiritual faculty which has not the intellectual and moral for its basis—that is, which ignores evidence and utility—is apt to be as pernicious as the imagination which ignores experience and fact. Of this family Mistress Susanna Avenil (to give her the usual designation of women living in such wedlock as she insisted on) was the eldest; Charles himself coming next; and the younger ones, whom I have termed the Avenil girls, bringing up the rear. There was thus a very considerable interval between the eldest and the youngest of the brothers and sisters.

Bright, intelligent, cheerful, and active, the sisters were a model of self-helpfulness and prudence. Though not devoid of sentiment in regard to the delicate matters of the affections, they were too practical in their management to let their affections minister to their discomfort. They had one and all asserted the privilege accorded to girls now-a-days, of quitting

the parental shelter at the same age that their brothers quit it, in order, like them, to follow the vocations they have chosen.

No sickly exotics were they, such as their foremothers of ages long past. For them was no herding together under the perpetual parental eye, like silly sheep sure to be lost if once they strayed; no sacrificing the individuality of their genius or their characters, and passing their lives in worthless frivolity or listless indolence, envious of the active careers of their brothers, powerless to earn or to spend, and absolute slaves to the exigencies or caprices of their parents, until marriage should come to deliver them to a new bondage. The days happily are long past, in which, while to men all careers were open, to women there was but one, and it depended upon the will of individual men to accord them that. It is little wonder that, thus placed, the women of those times should have devoted themselves to the pursuit of marriage, with an eagerness commensurate with the uncertainty of success, and reckless whether the issue promised ill or well. Nor is it strange that, caring nothing for the characters of the men, but only for their wealth, the women should have so deteriorated in their own characters that the men ceased to care for them, except as companions of the moment, and declined to ally themselves with them in any but the most temporary manner. The literature of the Victorian era, just preceding the Emancipation, abounds in evidences of the hapless condition of the British female of that period, particularly in the middle and upper classes. It was the very intensity of her despair of any amelioration of her condition by conventional remedies, that precipitated the radical change of which we are now so richly reaping the benefits. That this change was not effected long before, was owing, it must be confessed, to the timidity of the men, and their want of faith in the inherent goodness of the female heart. The men had suffered the women to retain their belief in ecclesiastical infallibility long after they themselves had abandoned such belief. The irrevocability of marriage, dictated as it was by priests, had at least the appearance of being a revenge taken by them

for their own exclusion from it. It was the disastrous result of ecclesiastical restriction upon the relations of the sexes, far more than a process of rational investigation, that opened the female mind to the baselessness of ecclesiastical pretensions. The men fought their own way to freedom by dint of hard brain-work. It was for them a battle royal between truth and falsehood, or rather between the right to obey the dictates of their own minds and consciences, and the claims of antiquated tradition. But they did not take their women with them. Either through difference of nature or difference of training, these were not amenable to the considerations which had influenced the men. Woman cared nothing for the abstract truth or falsehood of her religion. Her heart was the sole instrument whereby she judged such matters. The ordinance of the church which rigidly forbade all intercourse with the other sex, save on condition of an indissoluble life-long contract, had come to have the effect of abolishing even those very contracts. While those who were already involved in them, finding themselves unable to part, were driven more and more to desert. Woman had so far subordinated her intellect and moral sense to the authority of her priests, so far forgotten her heart, as to accept at their hands a deity and a faith which were independent of any considerations recognizable by those faculties. Her new-born infant might be consigned to everlasting torture for the omission by its parents of a prescribed ecclesiastical ceremony; but the system that kept her from getting a husband in this world was intolerable. And by insisting on the absolute permanence of the tie, the church had virtually abolished marriage.

That a great change was necessary and inevitable, was seen by both men and women long before the particular nature of the change could be forecast. The patience of the British people never received a more signal illustration. Desiring gradual amelioration, and not sharp revolution, generation after generation went on hoping against hope. But the evil continued to increase. The women flocked to their temples, and performed ardent devotions; but they did not obtain hus-

bands; neither did they lose the desire for them. In those few generations, when the evil was at its worst, millions of fair, well-grown, noble-minded women, lived and died in hapless longing to fulfil their nature, and find a scope for their affections. The causes were numerous, but they were all traceable to one general cause, the violation of natural law. Destructive wars, huge standing armies, colonization by males alone—these had served to destroy the proper numerical proportion between the sexes. Added to this was the artificial tone of society, whereby women had come to be regarded as weaklings unfit to bear the storms of life, or to help men to fight and win their way in the world; equal, however, to sharing the spoils after the victory had been won. Even parents preferred to see their daughters pine and wither in singlehood, to their wedding on other terms.

It was not to destroy, but to restore marriage that the country at length consented to extend the principle of limited liability to the relations between the sexes. The evil was at its height when the legislature passed an enactment recognizing as valid other contracts than those on which it had hitherto insisted in marriage. As is well-known, the relief was instantaneous, the morals of the country were saved, marriage was restored, the *family* was preserved. Many, remembering the ancient feuds, declared that this only was wanting to complete the triumph of Protestantism. Our institutions were now free from the reproach of immorality attaching to all vows involving irrevocability. While many took this view of the indissoluble contract, unions without any contract were held in universal reprobation. People were free to make their own terms of partnership, but a contract cognizable by the state was regarded as indispensable for all persons possessing self-respect, and to marry without a formal contract was, as is still the case, regarded as highly improper. But it is for breaches of contract, whether formal or implied, that society reserves its strongest condemnation.

The ingenuity of the lawyers proved equal to the requirements of the new regime. Forms of contract suitable to all

tastes and circumstances were duly invented. Practically, the marriages were (and are) of three kinds: those which were dissoluble only through the intervention of a court of law: those which required the mutual consent of the parties: and those which were voidable at the will of one of the parties. But in all of them room is generally found for legal assistance. They are called, respectively, marriages of the first, second, and third class.

Thus, the sequel showed how huge is the mistake made by man when he seeks to regulate existing society by ideas belonging to a remote past. The feelings of the living will not be ignored. Admitted to their due share in the council, they are an indispensable ally. The *Maids' Revolt*, as the woman's movement, which had its origin on the other side of the Atlantic, was called, was an important contribution towards the achievement of "the glorious Emancipation," which involved the utter fall of the old church system.

It was a comparatively small spark that fired so great a train. Had the ecclesiastical mind been of a more practical cast, it would have consented to concessions that might have saved the edifice for a long time to come.

A movement was made (it was in the latter part of the nineteenth century) for relieving the church-going public from the recitation of a creed which contained clauses repugnant alike to their intellect, their moral sense, and their good taste. This creed, called, according to ecclesiastical wont, by the name of a person who was well known to have had no hand in its production, not only contained statements which were altogether incomprehensible or self-contradictory, but by virtue of what, in the vocabulary of the female theologians of the period, were designated its *damn*atory clauses, it consigned to everlasting misery all who failed implicitly to accept those statements.

The ecclesiastical mind, incapable of appreciating that finer sense of truthfulness, which led the laity to hesitate about declaring their belief in statements avowedly beyond evidence and probability; or of charity, which made them demur to passing upon their neighbors such sentence, and for such cause,

stuck to the obnoxious formulary with all the obstinacy of a papal infallibility. The so-called "Creed of St. Athanasius" thus operated as a seton to keep the sore open, until at length all the other creeds and dogmas of the church were brought into question. Of these, the dogma of marriage was the one that ultimately enlisted the women on the side of freedom; and for the first time in the history of the world the Woman was arrayed against the Priest. The cause of freedom was won once for all. Thenceforth, for all civilized peoples, experience took the place of tradition and authority in the guidance of life.

It was in pursuance of the same principle that the enfranchisement of women was restricted to matters purely social. In all that affected the mutual convenience of the sexes, they were allowed to bear their part. From politics, as resting upon strength of muscle, and therefore fitted only for men, they were excluded. It is true they did not readily acquiesce in the limitation. And the argument based upon Babies failing, the men fell back on the argument based upon Biceps. "When you can share," they said, "our place as policemen, soldiers, and sailors, by land, sea and air, then we shall be happy to admit you to a share in the enactment of laws, of which, at present, the execution falls upon us. We grant that taxation involves a certain right, but it is, so far as you are concerned, the right, not of representation, but of protection."

But though we declined to confer public legislative and executive functions upon women, we were not unwilling to conciliate them by utilizing their suggestive powers, and so created the chamber which bears the name of the House of Female Convocation, the members of which are elected by women, though they need not themselves be women. The powers of this body are investigatory, deliberative, and recommendatory, in regard to the Houses of Legislature. It thus serves as a place for initiating the discussion of questions especially affecting women and children. It is worthy of remark, that although in the first enthusiasm for its institution, a very small propor-

tion of those elected were men, the number of women has, ever since, steadily declined, until it now amounts to scarcely five per cent. of the whole body. Considering moreover, the greatness and importance of its constituency, the House of Female Convocation has not attained the eminence and influence which might fairly have been expected for it.

Two hypotheses have been framed to account for this comparative failure. One, that women do not choose the best persons to represent them. The other, that the circumstance of being chosen by and having to represent women, has a deleterious effect upon the persons chosen.

Mistress Susanna Avenil, who was for a term Vice President of the chamber, is acknowledged to have been one of the most useful it has ever possessed.

CHAPTER XII.

And what had the Church to say for the new social development? Its once famous Reformation had delivered it from the tyranny of Rome. But how came it to consent to the Emancipation, which delivered it from the tyranny of its own dogmas and traditions? Deprived of its life-blood, how could the Church continue to exist?

For one reared as I was, in the ranks of the old orthodox *Remnant*, such questions as these involve far greater significance than is now-a-days generally recognized. I can see now that what I and my fellow-religionists took for the church's life-blood, was in reality its death-poison. I shall save space in my narrative, and at the same time fulfil one essential part of its design, if I anticipate by some years the introduction of myself into the story, and relate here the incident which led, ultimately, to my return to *The Triangle*, and intimacy with Christmas Carol.

From all things external to our own sect, we of the Remnant

rigidly kept aloof, regarding ourselves as a peculiar people, endowed with the high duty of keeping alive on earth the light of Divine tradition, as derived from remote antiquity, and interpreted by the teachers whom for the correctness of their views we selected to be its exponents.

We thus represented the secession from the Emancipation, for we consisted of that party which refused to acknowledge, as being a church at all, an institution which did not define the faith and practice of its members according to standards derived from antiquity, but left it to the congregations and their teachers to follow their own individual perceptions in faith and morals.

As was to be expected, so vast a movement was not made without causing considerable inconvenience and distress. The number of the malcontent clergy was too great for more than a fraction of them to find employment within the Remnant. Of the rest, some entered upon a secular life, and others, to a considerable number, accepted a proposal made by the Emperor of Abyssinia, that they should settle in that country, which already was Christian, and attempt the conversion of his newly acquired provinces in Soudan. It is owing to their labors that throughout nearly the whole of the Central African plateau, from the Nile to the Niger, the profession of Christianity has succeeded to that of Mahometanism. The achievements of Christmas Carol in those regions, thus have for me, as an old member of the Remnant, a peculiar interest.

Of course, I see now plainly enough, that a civil government cannot with any reasonableness or propriety claim to be qualified to decide between different points and modes of faith, or to select one form of belief in preference to another. All that such a government can know is that it depends for its own existence and stability upon the general intelligence and moral sense of its citizens; so that it cannot with any show of consistency, or regard for the common security, maintain a system which sets that intelligence and moral sense at nought.

But we of the Secession did not think so, for those whom we had appointed to be our teachers did not think so, and we

were bound to follow them. And so it came, that while the vast mass of our countrymen were rejoicing in the freedom of the Emancipation, we stood aloof under the old banners and declined all advance towards compromise or reconciliation. We declined even to read books and newspapers which emanated from the other side, but were content with those which we could ourselves produce. And, though existing like a congested mass in the midst of an otherwise healthy system, we were entirely without thankfulness for the tolerance which left us unmolested.

Such tolerance, I remember, struck me in my early youth as inexplicable, except on the ground that our opponents were possessed by a secret conviction that they were in the wrong. Had our side been in a large majority, we certainly should not have suffered any who differed from us to exist. Why, then, did the other side, who must often be irritated by our contemptuous assumption of superiority, and even of infallibility, not annihilate us? We assuredly could not put forward our good citizenship as a plea for their forbearance; for we made a point of subordinating our duties as citizens to our sectarian obligations, and this especially as regarded the education of our youth, and thus were a constant thorn in the sides of our countrymen. Could it be that they despised us for sentimentality and feebleness, or for the paucity of our numbers? I could not comprehend it; for all the lessons I had ever been taught were those of the most rigid intolerance in respect of that which we considered wrong, namely, difference in opinion from ourselves.

One evening I had gone to hear a performance of sacred music at the Alberthalla;—that noble monument to the virtues of a famous prince of the Victorian era—which, with its galleries of the busts of British worthies, fulfils a double use as a national Valhalla, and a hall for musical and vocal exercitations.

After getting to my seat, I found that I had mistaken the evening, and that the vast crowd which prevented my leaving on discovering my error, had met to witness an elocutionary

exhibition, and in particular to hear a new orator, who was said to be gifted with the finest voice and manner ever known.

I may here mention for the benefit of my younger readers, that the institution of a class of professional orators,—reasonable and necessary as it appears to us, who are accustomed to it —was altogether unknown to our ancestors of a few generations back. In their days a man might be gifted intellectually with the loftiest and most convincing eloquence, and yet be physically incapable of uttering a word in public. Of course, when the whole of the faculties, mental and physical, requisite to make the complete orator, happened to be combined in one person, the result was one of the highest achievements of humanity. But this was necessarily rare, and in numberless instances it happened that the noblest souls were dumb, the noblest sentiments unuttered, simply because nature had not chosen to endow the same individual with the requisite combination of powers. On the other hand, there were numbers of splendid physiques and capacities, so far as voice, manner, and dramatic faculty were concerned, but who yet lacked the genius, culture, or position, which were needful to supply them with aught to say, or the opportunity for saying it. For a long time the only resource for such as these was the Stage, for there the actor is not called upon to supply the matter.

At length it occurred to two men—I do not know whether they were brothers, or friends—to combine the faculties which they possessed in a remarkable degree; the one as a thinker and composer of orations, the other as an elocutionist; and join in the advocacy of some great public question which they had at heart. Carefully and patiently did they work together at their respective parts, until the time came for public utterance; the composer, who had an impediment in his speech, elaborating his matter and re-adjusting his sentences, until the argument and its expression perfectly fitted each other, and the elocutionist practising his delivery of the speech thus perfected, under the supervision of the composer, just as is done in learning a part for the stage.

The partners made no secret of their method, and the result was so gratifying to the public that they soon found imitators. In this way the practice of oratory became, like the Stage, a regular and liberal profession, and one that persons of position and culture were not ashamed to follow. And we now possess a class of professional orators, always ready, for a fee, to stand up and deliver a speech on any question, or side of a question, required, it being well understood that they are responsible neither for the words or the sentiments, but are mere machines of eloquence and grace. To them the vast audiences of modern times are indebted for many an intellectual treat, of which, but for such addition to the author's function, they would be altogether deprived.

The convenience of the system at length procured its introduction into Parliament and the Church; and so it has come to be no unusual thing for a minister of state to have his oratorical secretary, whom he deputes to deliver his speeches in the Legislature; or a teacher, his deputy in the pulpit, or on the platform.

Sometimes a party of orators combine to give an exhibition of their skill, and few exhibitions prove more attractive than such a performance, or more valuable as an educational agency. Our co-operative artisan classes have always taken especial delight in them. They say it is the best way of learning history.

On the evening of my presence for the first time at one of these contests, the subject for the recitations was an ancient parliamentary debate, partly real and partly imaginary, in the upper chamber of the Legislature towards the triumphant close of the great emancipation controversy in the Victorian era.

It was with no slight uneasiness that I found myself compelled to witness a performance which was strictly prohibited by the rules of the *Remnant;* but as I was not a transgressor by intention, and could not get out except by being hoisted over the heads of a mass of people,—an operation from which my retiring disposition made me shrink,—I reluctantly acquiesced in my fate.

The first speech, however, served to reconcile me to my position. The precise subject for the evening was, The Church: should it be loosened from the State, to follow its own traditions, or should it be made that which it has since actually become—a national, rather than a denominational, institution —and retained as a department of the State.

The leader of the discussion opened with a speech which completely satisfied me, so convincing on my side of the question did his arguments appear. He took the line that, the Church being altogether a Christian institution, and Christianity consisting of dogmas, to deprive the Church of its dogmatic basis would be to un-Christianize it. The secular power of course was not competent to judge of dogmas; it must therefore leave the Church sole mistress of itself. If the connection between them was to be maintained, it was for the benefit of the State, for the Church needed it not. She preferred to be independent. Only, under either alternative she must retain her possessions. To deprive her of these would be a fraud.

After this clear statement of the case for the Church, I breathed more freely, and felt indifferent as to what might be said on the other side.

But I was perplexed by the heartiness of the cheers which greeted the orator; even at the points which told most against the popular view of the day—the view which I knew to be probably unshared by a single person present except myself. I tried, therefore, to think that it was the orator, not the arguments, for whom the applause was given. Of the beauty of *method* in statement, I was then altogether ignorant.

The progress of the debate made me very uncomfortable. The tone of it was admirable in its elevation, and wonderfully illustrative of the difficulties through which our ancestors had to steer their way. I began to feel more tolerant of my opponents, now that for the first time I was enabled to comprehend somewhat of their stand-point. I experienced, too, a certain twinge of bitterness at having been so long shut out from the advantages enjoyed by my fellow-citizens. For the first time the real history of my country began to unfold itself to me. It

was very curious to see how completely the attention of the vast audience became engrossed by the merits, not of the rival orators, but of the controversy itself. The assembly seemed to have receded from the present, and to be composed in reality of tories and radicals, churchmen, nonconformists, positivists, and all the other strangely nomenclatured sects of those ages. And they shouted their assent and their dissent as eagerly as ancient records tell us used to be done in the Legislature itself; though of course without the vocal excesses, savoring of the farm-yard, which disfigured those ruder times.

I was already in a state of intense mental conflict when the new orator rose to produce what was expected to be the sensation of the evening. Should this story ever come under the eyes of any who are still in the bondage that afflicted my youth, they will comprehend and share the anguish I felt on first hearing it seriously asserted and plausibly argued that our dearly cherished religion is a mode of life, and not a set of opinions! and that whatever it be, whether practical or doctrinal, if it be not capable of development and adaptation by modification, it cannot be divine or suited to humanity; inasmuch as the divine life of the universe, of which man is a portion, is ever advancing towards loftier capacities and more complex conditions.

Well, at length it came to the turn of the man of the evening. Little availed the buzz of curiosity round me to remind me that the debate was but a recitation, and no real conflict of opinions. Like a half-drawn tooth, I was too far gone to be recalled. The process could not be stayed there. Of the new orator himself I can say little. My inability to describe him, or his style, is perhaps the best testimony to his power. Under the first strong impressions analysis fails. The maidens of old, when visited by a god in their sleep, did not forget their rapture to note the details of the interview. At least, the rapture must have been very much qualified to admit of their taking such notes.

In a few short sentences he dismissed much of what had been said as worthier of a council of ecclesiastics, than of a national senate.

"Our function," he said, turning to his fellow-orators who sat upon the platform, looking wonderfully like a real senate, "our function is not to discover abstract truth, or determine historical problems, but to do justice and prevent spoliation."

Now when he said this, I thought, why he is going to speak on my side, for if ever there was a case of injustice and spoliation, it was when the legislature turned the Church out of the Establishment, and appropriated its property to other uses.

"Whatever religion be the true one," he continued, "it cannot be incompatible with honesty and justice. And it is not honesty, not justice, to take from a nation that which it has set apart for the whole, and give it over to a sect which comprises but a part. Thus, the first question we have to deal with is not one of disestablishment, not one even of reform, but one of ownership. *Who is it* that is entitled to have a voice in the management and direction of the Church, or of any reform to be made in it?"

And then he went on to answer this question in terms which I can but indicate, without any claim adequately to reproduce the original, or describe their effect.

"I, sir," he said, "speaking neither as Churchman, nor as Nonconformist, but as a simple citizen, utterly repudiate the notion that this, our National Institution for promoting, not the suppression of Thought, but the highest welfare of our whole people,—(for such is my definition of a State-Church,)—is in any sense whatever the rightful exclusive property of that limited company which at present sits within and enjoys the monopoly of it, holding fast the door in the faces of the rest of their fellow-citizens—even of us, who stand without and knock, seeking in vain for admission, or else turn away in disgust, and resign ourselves hopelessly to our exclusion. No—as a citizen I claim this noble appanage of the Established Church, this splendid and far-reaching organization, this affluence of resource, this accumulation of prestige, as Ours! ours to use and enjoy, ours to preserve and amend, ours to hand down as a fair inheritance to our posterity, in the highest degree of efficiency to which we can raise it. It is not that we have out-

grown all need of such an institution. The fact that we have called into existence, or are actively maintaining, numerous private institutions of a similar character, proves that day to be still far distant. It is not that its shortcomings are due to its connection with the State. As well might the shortcomings of the Police, the Railways, or the Post Office, be ascribed to their connection with the State. No, the shortcomings of which we complain in the Established Church are due solely and exclusively to the self-imposed limitations of that body to which the State has committed the management and control of the department. Namely, those limitations upon opinion and expression which have led to the exclusion of more than one-half of the people, and at least nine-tenths of the intelligence, of the country, from participating in its conduct and advantages.

"We hear," he continued, after a brief pause, "those who affect to be friends of liberty, demanding what they are pleased to call the liberation of religion from State control. Liberty! What a spell must lie in that word, when even its enemies venture to conjure with it! Fancy the man bound hand and foot, a willing slave, to religious dogma, pretending to wish to 'liberate religion!' You all know what it is we mean by *Papist.* But away with these old terms. They mean nothing now. There are Protestant papists as well as Catholic papists. The contest is now not between Romanism and Protestantism. It is between Dogmatism and Science; between Credulity and Knowledge; between Assumption and Proof; between Dreaming and Waking; between Slavery and Freedom. For an organization which rests upon a dogmatic basis, to demand exemption from State-control, is for a tyrant to demand liberty that he may be free to impose a heavier bondage.

"No, no, there is but one way of liberating religion, of nationalizing the Church-establishment. Let the State, for that alone is competent for the task, abolish all limitation of Article, Test, and Creed, which serve but to close the human soul to the divine voice speaking through man's developed mind and conscience. Let it abolish these barriers, which were

reared in the dark ages of the past, and put Humanity in direct *rapport* with its Maker. In place of a caste and a sect of narrowly-educated perfunctionaries, let all good and capable men be free to speak to their fellows that which the universe has revealed to them concerning itself. Then, and then only, shall we be free to hearken to the voice of that Spirit of Truthfulness of which long ago it was declared that, when it is come, it will guide us into all truth."

I was fast being vanquished, when he proceeded to describe the results of the opposite course, and showed the danger that would inevitably accrue to the State by erecting in its midst a vast power like the Establishment, bound by virtue of its traditions for evermore to crush the souls of men beneath a load of incomprehensible and unverifiable statements, and restrain the development of that very intellect and moral sense upon which the State itself subsisted. The proposed rival scheme of Disestablishment he denounced as being thus a suicide for the State, and a robbery for the nation, inasmuch as it would involve the transfer of an organization and appliances invaluable for the nation's educational uses, to a sect comprising but a fragment of the nation, and vowed to repress the development of the national mind. "Let it not be for nothing," he said, "that we once dared to use Ireland as a *corpus vile* on which to experiment for our own benefit. The statesman who robbed Ireland of its national Establishment, and endowed a sect with the proceeds, has other claims to the national gratitude. For this, he has none."

After a rapidly sketched comparison between England torn by religious factions, and oppressed by dogmas and traditions, and England united and free, he concluded by asking, in the words of one who in that age was regarded as being at once poet and prophet:—

"Is it never to be true that 'God fulfils himself in many ways?' If so, if the Church is to declare that He shall fulfil Himself in but one way, and that the Church's way,—that is, if He is to be prevented from 'fulfilling Himself' at all, let us leave the Church as it is, or rather, let us raise higher its bar-

riers, and strengthen its chains; let us stereotype our minds and consciences into dull inanimate uniformity, and sink resignedly to the monotonous level and torpid existence of marsh monsters; but no longer let us flatter ourselves that we are made in the image of Him who loves to 'fulfil himself in many ways.' Lacking such faith in the All-Living and All-Being, it is the Church, not the world, that is Atheist."

After the conclusion of the recitations, I sat absorbed in my reflections, heedless of the buzz and tramp of the departing crowd; heedless even of the darkness in which the hall was fast being wrapped, through the withdrawal of the lights. So real for me had been the whole scene and controversy, that it seemed as if the ages had rolled back, and I was an interested partaker in the conflicts of the past. But, far back, in one respect, as the ages seemed to have rolled, in another respect they had made a wondrous advance. The change in me was as great and profound as that which passes over a woman between the day before and the day after her marriage. I felt that I could never become again as I had been. The leprous scales of bigotry and sectarianism had dropped from me, and I was now a citizen and a free man. And more than this. I felt that it might yet be possible for the god of this world to be other than the devil. I looked round for some one to greet as brother, I who had ever been walled-up in the pharisaism of orthodoxy!

At this moment a light step, coming from the room whither the orators had retired after the contest, approached, and stopped by me. Looking wistfully up, I beheld a face bent upon mine, a face such as I had never before seen except in ancient paintings. It was the face of a man about double my own age—I was about sixteen—and beautiful exceedingly, it seemed to me upon reflection, for at the moment I was conscious of nothing beyond the glance of the most mysterious, and penetrating, yet kindest eyes, which, as it were, took in my whole being, and made all self-revelation superfluous. Then a voice, low, measured, distinct, and unutterably sympathetic, said to me:

"My young friend,—pardon my freedom in addressing you,—I sat near you this evening, and read all that passed in your soul. The times of which we have been hearing were the grandest in their issues that the world has seen. Had you and I lived then, how eagerly would we have thrown ourselves into the conflict, and struck for God and Humanity! What were ever the battles of flesh and blood compared to that tremendous conflict of principles, which happily for us resulted in the Emancipation? You feel this, now, at last?"

Won by his look and tone, I said,—

"Ah, sir, what then becomes of the Revelation?"

"My friend," he replied solemnly, "so long as there exist God and a soul, there will be a revelation, but the soul must be a free one."

I make no answer, and he added,—

"I must not aggravate the impertinence of which I have already been guilty in addressing you, by withholding my name, though I am satisfied you do not consider it one. Here is my card, and if ever you desire to improve our acquaintance, or think I can serve you, seek me out. Good night."

On the card was *C. Carol, Triangle.* It was not until long afterwards that I saw him again.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Nationalization of the Church Establishment—achieved as it was by the practical sense of the English people, and in spite of those who loudly clamored for a policy of severance or destruction,—proved to be the gateway of the Emancipation. By it religion, education and society were at once set free to remodel themselves in accordance with the perceptions and needs of the age. The desire to separate the Church from the State, vanished entirely so soon as the department was thrown open and adapted to the wants of the people. Now, for the first time

in the history of the world, was there a really free church, and it was to the scientific spirit that the achievement was due—the spirit that said that if a thing were true and necessary to be received, men could always hold it in virtue of its demonstrability and usefulness, so that dogma was a mischievous superfluity. Under the accession of a new bond of citizenship, the vast majority of the dissenting sects brought their wealth of organization and appliances, their learning and their zeal, and added them to the common national stock. The "religious difficulty," as I have already explained, vanished, and thenceforward Church and School worked together in the common cause of universal education, and upon a common basis; for there was no longer a conflict between faith and knowledge, religion and science, theology and morals—except, of course, in the little clique to which I belonged, arrogantly self-styled *The Remnant*. In the newly-constituted National Church, the State insisted that in order to be teachers, men must be educated up to a certain standard. Upon that basis they were free to rear their own fabric of thought.

Thus the Emancipation consisted in the substitution of experimental and intuitional morality for the old traditional system. This involved the release of women from their previous condition of social dependence. The adoption by them of several new modes of living was the instantaneous result of their enfranchisement. And from the first the experiment was found to work better than even its advocates had anticipated, multitudes of persons who had hitherto lived together unmarried, eagerly entering into contracts recognizable by the State, and thereby legitimatizing their children. Indeed, the proportion that abused their newly-won liberty was almost inappreciable, and these few would doubtless have proved failures under any system. Moreover, being made far easier of attainment through the relaxation of its conditions, marriage ceased to be an object of morbid desire. Women had something else to occupy their thoughts, and were more frequently content to follow other careers. Girls were brought up to look upon it as a thing that might some day overtake them as an

accident, more or less happy, but in no wise as their sole destiny, to miss which would be to fail in life. Our ancient customs in regard to women were such that we can hardly refer to them without a blush: so fatal to their morals was apt to be the struggle to secure their virtue. The Emancipation changed all this. It reinstated Modesty in the high place so long monopolized by mere Chastity. And, woman having learnt to respect herself, man, no longer a prey hunted and scared, learned to respect her also.

It is worthy of note that in some cases the consciousness of freedom produced an astringent effect upon manners. For instance, previously to the removal of the prohibition against the intermarriage of brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, such marriages were exceedingly frequent, but since that event they have rarely or never occurred. Not that there is anything against them, but it is a notable commentary on the principle of artificial restraints, to find that the restraint itself operated against itself. It was the intimacy fostered under cover of the legal fiction of relationship between persons so situated, that produced the desire for a closer connection. When there was no longer any law against a man's marrying his wife's sister, such sister could no longer enter her brother-in-law's house, except on the same terms of distance which regulated his intercourse with other women. There was thus no longer the attraction so apt to be engendered of custom and propinquity.

There is yet another variety in our mode of marrying to which reference must be made, as it is that which was adopted by Susanna Avenil. Her marriage was not only of the third class, but it was of that class and the separate system combined. Though married, she did not live with her husband. These marriages are far from rare, and their origin is somewhat curious. It had from time immemorial been an almost universal practice of girls, and even of grown women, of independent means and gentle nurture, to surround themselves with pet animals, upon which they were proud to be seen expending their tenderest sympathies. Scarce a maiden lady in Britain but possessed one or more of these creatures, whom she maintained at great expense of feeling and money.

At length, some time after the Emancipation, some ingenious and benevolent person, seeing how many destitute children the country still contained in its streets and other asylums, proposed to place a heavy tax on all animals which were kept for luxury and not for use, but to convert it into a premium where the pet in question was an adopted destitute child.

The suggestion was favorably received by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, a supposed descendant of the once famous occupant of that office who excited boundless ridicule and wrath by a proposal to tax certain indispensable machines for procuring light and fire, called *Matches*. Many a sly innuendo was launched to the effect that the new tax now proposed might operate as a set-off to the previous one, by its tendency to multiply matches, a poor joke indeed, yet not at the time deemed too poor to find frequent utterance. The suggestion, however, was adopted, and many a pet beast was discarded in favor of an adopted youth or damsel. Young women who lived and worked alone, were found especially willing to take upon themselves the charge of some destitute child. And such was the independence of spirit which they acquired under the Emancipation, that they boldly faced the charges brought against them by some of their more conservative fellow-citizens with the answer,—

"Well, and why not? If we choose to exercise our maternal sympathies without parting with our liberty, why should we not do so?"

Tradition being discarded, there were no grounds on which to found a remonstrance. Parents could not complain, for their daughters, no longer dependent upon them, had ceased to encumber the paternal roof. They were free also from the obligation of making marriage settlements, and providing costly trousseaux. It is even said that the young women themselves, finding themselves prized for their more solid qualities, came to place less value upon their dress—dress, that supreme temptation of the sex, before which even our mother Eve is represented as having succumbed: for with her perfections she must have foreseen thus much of the consequences of her disastrous action.

It is true that there had as yet been no experience to justify the practice. But life has room for varieties, and experience said *Try.* And so the women of England, considering that all social expedients are necessarily the result of experiment, did try; and not being degraded by the consciousness that their unions were unrecognized by the law, succeeded beyond their most sanguine anticipations. For the men, finding them worthier of their love and confidence in their new-born independence and consequent elevation of character, offered themselves far more readily as partners in the higher classes of marriage than in any period of our history. Indeed, to have already proved her qualifications as a tender and judicious mother, came to be regarded by men of sense as a woman's strongest recommendation for marriage; and the question they asked was, not "Is she already a mother?" but "What sort of a mother is she?"

It is thus that modern society has escaped the evil which once constituted the greatest blot upon our social system. No longer called upon in the struggle for existence, to sell themselves either with or without marriage for the means of existence, women now give themselves only where they have already given their affections. Those affections being, by virtue of their very nature, not readily transferable, sexual vagabondage is reduced to a minimum, and its evils are altogether abrogated.

Inheriting the strongly marked independence of character belonging to her race, Susanna Avenil was one of those women who valued liberty above love, and placed her own individuality and work before her affections. She felt that as a woman she had a right to complete herself, and she regarded no human being as complete until he or she had become a parent. In her own case, it was a duty owed to the race, as well as to herself; a duty from which, had she been weakly in body or brain, she would have considered herself exempt; or, rather, her duty would have lain the other way. The lowest types and worst specimens of humanity, she argued, are sure to breed; so that if the best abstain, the world will soon be given up to the worst, and the struggle for existence will end in the survival of the least fit.

Her brother used to twit her by declaring that if she had her way, all the links would soon be missing which connected man with his rudimentary basis. Already had the ape, the savage, and the negro nearly disappeared, each in turn thrust out of existence by the race just above it, and she would still further widen the gap by eliminating the inferior specimens of the higher types.

It was without a particle of vanity that she regarded her own noble development of constitution and form. She had inherited them, and it was no merit of hers to have them. But the inheritance brought a duty with it. Having inherited, she must transmit them. It was only by repaying to posterity the debt owed to her ancestry, that she would deserve well of her kind.

The old-fashioned domestic life had no charm for her. She deemed it fatal to independence and individuality; and scorned, as an oriental extravagance, the notion that it is a woman's chief end to minister to the comfort of a man. She scorned also the man who wanted such comfort. People had said that although so fine a creature, she was of a hard nature. But a time came when she appeared to them to soften. She had experienced a grief, a mortification, and for some time held her head less high than had been her wont. Had she been crossed in love? No; the man with whom she had entered into matrimonial partnership had exhibited no symptom of indifference to her. He was a noble fellow, but she had failed to become a mother, and the failure was to her a bitter sorrow. She feared that, after all, she was not to be a complete woman, and at this thought her stately head drooped. The terms of her contract made a severance easy, even had the legislature not regarded childlessness as a valid plea. Their compact had been one into which but little of sentiment, as commonly understood, entered. Mingling with his feeling of profound respect for her nobility of character, was a regret on the score of the too business-like nature of her disposition. Her temperature could not rise to the level of such love as was likely to prove creative.

At least, such was his theory. As for himself, he soon married again, and then came a new mortification for Susanna. It did not consist in that which ordinarily constitutes a humiliation for women. She knew not how to be jealous. But in his new association her late husband became a father.

At length she gathered courage to try again. This time, to her joy and pride, she had the success for which she pined. It seemed then as if nature had reversed its usual order of sequence. Love for her children was followed by love for their father. Under this feeling she wished to renounce the principle upon which she had dwelt apart from him in a home of her own, with independent establishment and liabilities, and follow the ordinary domestic usage. She was ready even to encounter the taunts and reprobation of the party of whose tenets she was one of the most distinguished exponents. Disapproving of the familiar intimacy of ordinary married folk, as ministering to indifference and contempt, the conception which this party had of wedlock was that of men and women dwelling apart from each other, like gods and goddesses on the peaks of Olympus, always on their good behavior, and seeing each other only at their best. In accordance with this idea Susanna had been "content to dwell in decencies for ever," as an old poet hath it,—however unsatisfying to the heart,—isolated and dignified, and receiving the visits of her consort in cold and formal state. When she now signified her readiness to abandon the separate system, she found an unexpected obstacle in her husband himself. He had not belonged to her party, but being a truly conscientious man, he declared he could not accept the responsibility of making her infidel to the tenets of her life. They had got on admirably together so far, and it would be a thousand pities to risk all by seeing more of each other. He even said something about it being a "tempting of Providence." It is believed that he fully intended to come round in time, but that Susanna—to whom he was really attached—would be the happier afterwards for his seeming reluctance. It was with much amusement that her friends were watching the progress of her perversion, when unfortunately her husband died.

Susanna was long inconsolable; but as her children grew up and flourished under her sole direction, she gradually became reconciled to her bereavement, and forgot how nearly her heart had betrayed her into turning renegade to her most cherished principles. It was thus that her own experience served to confirm her belief in the soundness of her views respecting the relations of the sexes; at least, for persons of her own temperament.

CHAPTER XIV.

As Christmas Carol approached manhood, he manifested certain tendencies which ofttimes indicated to his friends a sympathy with the *Remnant* and its doctrines. Cultivating an ideal in accordance with his own strongly religious temperament, and regarding love as a deep devotion and life-worship, involving the gathering up of all the relations and clues of being, and casting them at the feet of the beloved object,—he hardly could bring himself to recognize as capable of love at all those to whom it was a diversion and an amusement, a pleasant pastime for occasional indulgence, and capable of transference from one object to another. Even the frequent companionship of the Avenils, who found other engrossments more absorbing than those of the affections, and consequently respected the light and changeable of heart, rather than those for whom love was the supreme passion, failed to operate as a corrective to Criss's tendency to intolerance on this subject.

He did not, however, imitate the *Remnant*, and condemn people for having dispositions and principles different to his own. But he could not help wishing that nature had in this respect made everybody more like himself.

The Avenils held, and not without reason, that Criss's addiction to a contemplative life served to foster an ideal which bore little relation to the real. It was his wont, whenever the

real, either in act or in word, jarred on him, to jump into his Ariel, saying,—

"I shall go and lose the taste of it in the society of my angels."

And presently he would be soaring far above the clouds, in regions where—for ordinary eyes—all was blank and still; but which for him contained sweet sights and exquisite sounds; for his ideal became real, and heaven opened itself to him.

"Is it not very lonely up there?" asked one of the Avenil girls of Criss, on his return from a long flight.

He was in a more communicative mood than usual. And the girls left their various occupations, and gathered round him while he held forth.

"Lonely up there! Oh no, it is never dull in heaven. There is quite as much variety in life there as here. I see what is in your minds. You fancy the people of the ideal world are all grown folk who do nothing but talk profoundly. That they cannot suffer from hunger, and therefore have no need to work. That they run no risk of sickness or death, and therefore need not to be careful. That there are no young angels who require to be tended and trained. That they all love God, and therefore do not love each other. Ah, no wonder you think it dull. Perhaps you think, too, that they are made of a material too attenuated and transparent to be visible to the eye, and too rare of density to be perceptible to the touch? Perhaps you even think they are all alike in the uniformity or rather lack of sex?"

Criss did not know that Bertie had already reported many of his aërial experiences. The girls manifested great curiosity, and said—

"Are there such distinctions in those regions? Do tell us, dear Criss."

But they showed no levity; that, they knew, would at once close his heart and his lips.

They could not, moreover, help feeling a certain degree of awe on recognizing the manifest likeness of character subsist-

ing between him and those mystics of antiquity who founded the various religions of the world. Occasionally, in his absence, they would discuss the question how far his peculiarity was due to an extraordinary vividness in the faculty of personification, whereby the ideas perceived by his mind were at once transmuted into bodily form by his eyes; and how far they had a basis in fact.

Criss's own theory involved an identification of material and spiritual substances.

"Thought," he argued, "does not think. It is the product of something that does think;—that is, of a really existing entity. This entity may be the basis of all things; and it is a mere assumption to regard it as incapable of manifesting individuality and intelligence under forms other than our own, and without transmutation into the grosser plasms."

The general conclusion of the Avenils was that he was subject to a tendency to dream without entering the condition of sleep. The strong asseverations of impossible events with which history abounds, they held to be due, by no means necessarily to conscious falsehood, but rather to that unconscious and abnormal activity of the imagination which has its results in the waking-dream. Such dream may endure but for an instant, and come in the midst of a crowd of distractions, and be manifestly based on facts of which we were previously aware; but it is not the less a dream. The confusion of the objective with the subjective, caused by this characteristic, was, they believed, so liable to be mischievous in its effects, that they ardently hoped that Criss would, as he became older, grow out of it.

It was in reply to their eager questioning respecting the sex of his aërial friends, that he said—speaking in his most serious tone,—

"The love of God in the heart of the creature must expend itself on the creature, otherwise it would madden or destroy. Were there no sex, there would be nought but self-love. Therefore is Duality the universal law of life. There are, however, mysteries which the Angels themselves cannot fathom.

Outwardly, their form of government is republican, having no visible head. Inwardly, it is monarchical and theocratic, for the idea of God rules in the breast of each. Every individual angel has a voice in the common affairs. It would be impossible to exclude the female angels from taking an equal share with the male, in political as well as in social matters, for all dress and look alike, save only to the eye of love.

"Down here, with us, should a woman approach the polls, the official, being a male, and constituting himself a judge of dress and fashion, as well as of nomenclature, would say, 'By the character of your dress, or the termination of your name, I adjudge you to be a woman. You must therefore retire. The privilege of voting is not accorded to those who are thus attired or styled.'

"The universal development of sex with us, makes such outward distinctions indispensable. But, above, sex is a matter of private concern, unrevealed to the official eye, and manifest only to the loved one. Indeed, until love comes, I understand sex has no existence, being produced only under the influence of a natural affinity. When two young angels first conceive an affection for each other, they know not into which sex either of them will develop. But these things are mysteries, not yet fully revealed to me."

"My difficulty," remarked one of the elder girls, "in comprehending a perfect existence, is mostly of this kind. Of course there must be desires to be indulged, and gratifications to be obtained; for without them existence would be devoid of an object and aim. But if what one wants comes without effort, it possesses little value and brings little happiness. And if the requisite effort be great, it may surpass the powers of some to make it successfully, and so lead to disappointment and despair. I should like to know how the inhabitants of the ideal world contrive to balance between the two conditions."

"You are imagining a perfection," answered Criss, "that is impossible, save for two, the All-being, and the Non-existent. The happiness of the Angels consists in the perfection of their sympathies, which tell them what is within their power of

attainment, and what is beyond it; and of their good sense, which leads them to be satisfied with the former. The leading rule of their lives is found in their own Inmost. The worship of the Inmost is the ritual of heaven. It alone is sacred to each, for to each it is the whisper of the All-being. God is to them neither Sphinx nor Fiend, but truly a Father of Lights. There, no church would be catholic, no conventionalism moral, which sought to override this Divine voice in any individual soul."

"Why, that is the essence of the Emancipation," said another of the party; "to follow our individual temperaments, instead of laying down an identical rule for all."

"But it does not follow that one temperament is not capable of a far higher degree of happiness than another," said Criss.

"That may be," was the reply; "yet I suspect that frequency of repetition is, for many of us poor mortals, a very fair substitute for intensity of emotion."

"I ought to have said," answered Criss, "that the angels exempt love from the category of variables. That is always a serious matter with them."

"I don't care to be an angel, then," exclaimed the charming and vivacious Bessie. "And I pity them, for they evidently don't know the pleasure of flirting."

While his friends of the Emancipation credited him with approximating to *The Remnant*, those of the latter with whom he held occasional intercourse, thought him terribly far gone in the other direction.

They held the strong old-fashioned doctrines respecting the heinous nature of "sin;" and Criss maintained that they had no right to judge of such matters except by analogy. "No human parent," he argued, "ever considers his child to have erred past forgiveness. You have no right to think that the Universal Parent is harder. As for our own repentance for our faults, if He can allow them to find a place in his domain, it is possible that we may find things better worthy to absorb our attention."

He even became bitter and sarcastic in his reprobation of the slavishness and timidity of their orthodoxy.

"Love God!" he exclaimed to a group with whom he was discussing these matters. "Surely you would not have the presumption. Fear to do wrong! Of course it is better to do nothing than to do wrong. Much better had it been if the Creator had acted on your principles, and abstained from creating. Had there been no Universe, there had been no sin."

Some of his hearers thought they detected a blasphemy in this utterance. It seemed to imply that the Creator himself preferred to do wrong rather than do nothing.

"Well," said Criss, with a smile that horribly perplexed them, "do you hold that there is no evil in the Universe? If there be any, whence came it? And if there be none, what becomes of your favorite theory of things? Ah, if you would only fear less to see things with your own eyes."

"We fear nothing, for our souls are safe in his hands who has saved them," they said.

"None can save the soul of another," replied Criss. "Even he in whom you trust, can only shew us how to save our souls ourselves. It is not to be done by thinking or appearing, but by being and doing. Each of us is a force, to be put into action and utilized. It would be a poor sort of locomotive that discharged all its power into the air, for fear that, if it commenced to travel, it might run off the line."

His friends in the *Triangle* knew nothing of this side of his character. He was near his majority when Avenil, taking advantage of a visit from him, sought to sound him on the subject of his settlement in life.

"I sometimes fear," he said, "that we shall soon lose sight of you altogether. Your sympathies seem to be more with the old Orthodoxy of the *Remnant* than with us votaries of science. I shall not be surprised at seeing you finally captured by those daughters of Heth."

"Do I strike you in that light?" exclaimed Criss, surprised. "I had no idea of it. No, no, Mr., I mean Lord, Avenil dear. If I am not in perfect accord with you, I am far less in accord

with them. For me the first essential is genuineness. If ever I marry, than which nothing at present seems less likely, it is not among the fettered and conventional that I shall seek a wife. Her nature must be nature, not art; real, not manufactured. I do not quarrel with your method, so far as it goes; only, it seems to me to stop short by so much. In that your science has for its end and aim the development and satisfaction of the affections, it possesses my entire sympathy. They of the *Remnant* would crush those affections as being merely natural. You work with nature; they work against it. But I always feel that there are departments in nature of which you take no accounnt. Delicate and sensitive as are the instruments with which you gauge the finer material elements and their phenomena, they are still utterly inadequate to appreciate the existence and phenomena of the mind. There is thus a whole universe of facts lying entirely outside of your range, and to me the most interesting of all facts."

"Granted what you say," returned Avenil, "there will ever be this difficulty to be overcome:—the same mind cannot at once be in motion and at rest. Study implies activity, and in order to be studied the object must be at rest. A man therefore cannot investigate his own mind; and it is impossible to see into that of another."

"For me," replied Criss, "There seems to be an intermediate condition, of which you take no account; and it is that which I love to cultivate. I find I can do so with more success in the finer airs aloft, than down in these denser strata. It is a condition in which the mind becomes clear and luminous as crystal: absolutely at rest, so far as effort is concerned, but still self-conscious. It is a condition, not of thought, but of *reverie;* the condition in which alone since the world began, man has found it possible to hold converse with God. Your scientific activities can embrace but the limited; and these, parts only of the organism of the Universe. Spiritual reverie reveals the highest results of the whole. The value of such reverie, I grant willingly, is in proportion to the amount of moral and scientific training the mind has received. Knowledge and feel-

ing taken separately, are worth nothing. It is through their union alone that we can know God. It was because the intuitions of the ancients were unenlightened by science, or exact knowledge of nature, that they produced those hideous ideals of the deity which make the ancient religions so repulsive to us. Now, my reveries," he added, smiling, "have the benefit of all the knowledge I owe to your goodness to me; but surely I should be making light of that knowledge were I to interpret it by anything short of the best of the faculties I find in me, I mean my intuitive perception."

"You will remember," said Avenil, "that I have uttered no word against the possibility either of intuitive perceptions or of revelation. I say only that, without the capability of being verified by repetition and experience, it is impossible to communicate them to others. They remain in the region of dreams."

"I see," replied Criss, "and will think over what you say. But I did not come here to take up all your time in talking, but to congratulate you on your new dignity. I cannot tell you how pleased I am, both for your own sake and the country's."

Criss alluded to Avenil's appointment to a seat in the Upper Chamber of the Legislature, which had just been conferred, unsought, upon him. It was a grateful proof of the country's appreciation of his labors on behalf of science, especially in its sanitary and agricultural relations.

I may as well inform my younger or foreign readers, that it had been one of the achievements of the Emancipation to abolish the hereditary principle in respect of all offices, excepting only the Crown; and to substitute for it, in the Upper House, a system of election akin to one which had been suggested so long ago as the Victorian period. By this method any man who had won the confidence of the country at large might, without holding special relations with any particular district, and without putting himself forward as a candidate, find himself elevated to a peerage for life, together with a moderate allowance in money, and the historic prefix of *lord* to his own name, so as not to merge his identity in a new

appellation. The number of these lords was, after some fluctuation, fixed at five hundred. The Prime Minister of the day had also the power of nominating a certain small per-centage of the peers.

The lower chamber—(I mention this that all my readers at least may know the political constitution of this country)—consists of representatives and delegates from various localities. It rests between a constituency and its member, and depends mainly on the calibre of the latter, whether he should be a representative exercising his own judgment, or a delegate recording the opinions of a majority of his constituency.

The position of the country in respect of the crown, has for some time been very peculiar. Of all the nations of Europe, those only which retained their monarchical institutions were Russia and Great Britain. The rest, after changes and revolutions innumerable, have settled down, apparently for ever, with Constitutions modelled after the American type. Even we did not retain our old forms without a hard struggle. That we did retain them was owing partly to the failure of objectors to find a substitute free from objection; partly to the admirable manner in which the sovereigns of the Victorian dynasty fufilled their royal functions; and partly also to the complete emancipation of the country from dogmas political as well as religious. Experience having shown the monarchy to work well with us, it was not to be abolished at the dictation of republican dogmatists.

It was on the death of the famous queen, whose prolonged grief for the loss of her almost ideal husband has made her the heroine of many a tale and poem as a model of widowed constancy, that the splendor and cost of royalty in this country was reduced within reasonable limits. Her successor, a sensible, frank, and genial man, readily fell in with the new tariff, and he and his descendants enacted the part, rather of hereditary president than of sovereign, until, a few generations ago, when the family unfortunately became extinct. Unfortunately, I say, not because we have consciously suffered any appreciable damage as a people in consequence, but because it is impossi-

ble to help regretting the fall of a noble old tree that has for ages made a feature in the landscape, and braved the storms which have raged round it and us; because, also, we know not what may be in store for us in the future.

But when, through failure of heirs, the dynasty came to an end, something had to be done. What should it be? The country would not hear of sending abroad for a new royal family, and indeed there was no abroad to send to for one, unless we were prepared to accept a scion of Russia, Turkey, or Central Africa. This last was not without its advocates, on the ground that there would be a humorous retribution in placing on the throne of Britain a descendant of the famous Abyssinian monarch who had provoked our ancestors to destroy him.

All the plans in operation in the rest of the world were discussed and re-discussed, and a good deal of ill-feeling was making itself apparent, when a proposition was made to postpone the discussion of the question for six months, and in the meanwhile to consider the Prime Minister for the time being as invested with the presidential functions of the sovereign.

The interval allowed men's minds to become quiet, and at the end of the six months, no inconvenience having occurred, and no acceptible suggestion having been made, the Prime Minister was confirmed in his new functions for another six months. It has thus come about that our country has for several generations been in the enjoyment of a government far more republican than any deliberately-formed constitution in the world; for in all other republics there is a president who is virtually irremovable during a fixed term of office, whereas our president holds office only so long as he retains the confidence of the Legislative Chambers.

It is true that there was for some time a void in the mind of the nation which nothing seemed able to fill. The spectre of the vacant throne and crown, with piteous forlornness continually appealed to the popular imagination, so powerful do hereditary impressions sometimes become. And it was even feared that in some period of popular excitement a party might

be found to make political capital out of the supposed grievance. So, on a happy thought, it was determined to place the throne in one of the Chambers immediately behind the place occupied by the Minister-president, with the crown lying on the seat, and the national flag suspended above it. This combination of the symbols of the monachy and the nation, had the happiest effect in reconciling both royalists and republicans; and the new system of government has been found to work so well that we have allowed it to continue in operation ever since. Being avowedly only provisional, it involves no principle, and therefore no one considers it a point of honor to try to upset it on principle.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Away from the crowded earth, where men teem in such countless millions that solitude and contemplation are no longer possible upon its surface. Away from the sights and sounds of a complex civilization, with its manifold cares and incessant activities, its constant changes and perpetual sameness. Away from engrossments that occupy the body and clog the soul, and dull the spirit's perceptions, and hide from man that eternal Ideal from which he sprang, and to which he must return. Away into the boundless plains of mid-air, whither none from below can follow, where they only can penetrate in whom the soul is dominant, even they who are from above, denizens of the azure, children of the light, bright actualities of thoughts which the best only among mortals can imagine, which the most gifted cannot translate into words.

It is verse, not prose, that should tell of such flight into the empyrean;—tell how, when thus

> Leaving far the world behind,
> Like him of old, who on the wind
> Was rapt from earth, and, as he flew,
> Back his cumb'ring mantle threw;
> Ancient prejudices all
> To their native level fall;
> For selfish thoughts and coward fears
> Cannot break the bonds of years,
> Cannot flee time's narrow reign,
> And revel on the eternal plain—

Ah, no; only he who sang, as no other of earth's poets before him, or since, have sung, could paint the rapture of the flight as young Carol soared aloft upon the billows of the air, winging the blue deep ten thousand fathoms up, and higher yet, his whole being a song and a delight. Leaving, perchance, the earth wrapped in the pale, purple evening; regaining, as he sped, the golden light of the sunken sun; bathing awhile in the silver shower of the moonbeams, and visited all night by troops of stars, as they emerged from their hiding-places after the departure of their fair queen.

Then the dreams that would come, as he lay floating aloft, poised like an eagle asleep upon its outspread pinions. Dreams! Were they dreams? And was it sleeping or waking that they came to him? I reckon Criss knew not: knew not whether in the body or out of the body: whether in trance or in reality, when thus mounting as into the seventh heaven, he regained the society of angels, and was admitted into the recesses of the invisible world.

No wonder that even when, as one has sung of the bird of passage, all day long his wings had fanned at that far height, the cool, thin atmosphere, and the dark night drew near, he stooped not, weary, to the land; for then it was that to him, the rapt and kingly youth, who loved to hold such commune, his highborn kinsfolk came,—came as fair embodied visions and ideas, descending from the yet far rarer atmosphere of the regions where they dwelt, drawn by the force of the sympathies which they ever have with the worshipper of the Ideal. Little do people know what they lose when they clog their minds with preconceptions of the unverifiable, and in the positiveness of profound ignorance, close them against the teaching of the spirits.

So apt in discerning the spirits did Criss become, that he could recognize distinctions of gifts and characters, as well as of outward form. He made special friendships, too. There was one angel, tall of stature, and thoughtful and steadfast of mien, who conceived a great affection for him, and gave him many

details respecting their mode of life. And more than once Criss was struck by finding how near is the parallel existing between things celestial and things terrestrial; and this in respect even of moral characteristics. He was equally surprised to find that the inequality of their natures and developments is regarded by them with favor, inasmuch as it produces a pleasing variety, and contributes to the general effect of the spiritual landscape. Even a "bad" angel, as one of a corresponding class would be called on earth, is but as an accidental discord in a piece of music, and serves to enrich the general harmony.

One of their customs served to remind Criss of the exquisite art of horticulture. As our gardeners are in the habit of making even insignificant flowers effective in producing beauty, by massing a number of them together (no flower is "ugly"), so angels, who, individually, lack the qualifications necessary to secure distinction, gather together, like with like, into separate communities; and this, not through any law imposed upon them from without, but through the spontaneous operation of their own sympathies. He observed, also, that however large or prominent any of these sections may be, however convinced of their own surpassing perfections, or even however low in the scale of angelic excellence, they never make it a matter of reproach to any that they do not belong to them.

"It takes many different kinds of angels to make up heaven," Criss's tall friend remarked to him. "Even the lowest and most rudimentary angels have uses which save them from being regarded with contempt by the more highly endowed. I perceive that you experience a sensation of surprise at there being such a class among us. But all things finite are comparative. We regard as such those who form, or used to form, the bulk of all communities of beings endowed with a capacity for intelligence: those in whom the perceptive faculties are not active in proportion to their reflective. Their powers of retention exceed their powers of acquisition, so that habit has for them a stronger attraction than progress. They love a mechanical sort of existence, and being devoid of the sanguine and hopeful in their temperaments, and incapable of imagining in the future an

ideal of which the past shows them no counterpart, their faculty of memory altogether supersedes their faculty of aspiration. With you, down yonder, this class would claim for itself the title of *orthodox*, on the strength of its conformity to a standard derived from an actual past, however defective it be in regard to present needs. But here we recognize as alone entitled to rank as orthodox, those who keep their feelings and perceptions open to the reception of any fresh influences that may stream in from any part of the universe. Some of our oldest angels have told me that we used once to regard tradition as the test of truth, and that there are places in heaven where the practice still widely prevails; but they are far distant, in regions lying above the darker parts of the earth. With us who inhabit one of the most highly developed of the angelic spheres, to think freely, that is, what you used to call *heresy*, is alone counted as orthodox; not to think at all, or to think subserviently to aught but the actual, is heresy.

"The traditionalists, however, are valued among us for what they are, not for what they are not. Most of our historians, who serve to keep alive the memory of antiquity, and so enable us to mark the steps of our progress, come from among them. We find that the greater the period of time over which our generalizations extend, and the greater the number of facts they comprise, the more likely we are to attain a true judgment respecting our relations with the infinite. We do not find, however, that the recorders of facts are generally the most competent to generalize from them.

"I see you are cogitating over my phrase 'oldest angels.' You think that if there be ages in heaven, there must be birth, and perhaps death. There are both of these. We call the latter *disappearance*. All I can tell you about it is this: we have our time. All finite beings have their time. It is the law of the Supreme. He said in his counsels, 'I give them up all, reserving to myself one prerogative—Death. They are free to develop their natures to the full extent of their conditions: but all must submit to a period. There they must trust *me*.'"

"And we do trust Him. When too old to enjoy, or enable others to enjoy; perchance when needed elsewhere, we disappear. This keeps us from encumbering our sphere, and gives the younger angels a chance.

"What becomes of us on disappearing? Those who remain behind never know. Some have a vague notion that the Supreme puts us into the crucible of his love, and remoulds us for a fresh stage of existence. But our ignorance brings us no fear, our love and trust being perfect. We have no certainty of a future. Like you, we are phenomena, whether recurrent or not, we know not. Do children, with you, when they fall asleep in their parent's arms, wonder whether, or where, they will wake?

"So you thought we had only to will in order to have. Indolent wishing procures nothing, even in the highest of the spiritual spheres. We are bound to prove the reality of our desires by our efforts to realize them.

"The sense in which I use the term spirit? When signifying an entity, it differs from matter only in degree. In kind it is the same, or rather, they are different stages of the same material.

"You wish to know whether we possess aught that is capable of surviving the grosser organism, and becoming re-constituted as an individual.

"This is what I said we do not know. It is where we can only trust. Both in kindness and wisdom it is so ordained. In kindness, because hope is one of the most precious of possessions, and where all is certainty there is no room for hope. In wisdom, because the imaginative faculty which appertains to all intelligent beings, would, by the certainty of a future state, be called into such intense activity respecting its nature, as to make the present comparatively valueless. The Supreme lives in the Now, as well as the Then. So that to contemn and neglect the present life, is to defraud Him and ourselves also.

"Glance to the past history of your own world. Whence have sprung the vast majority of the evils your own race has experienced? Is it not through regarding as absolutely certain

that which ought to be an aspiration and a hope, that man has sacrificed the happiness provided for him in the present life, to his fears respecting the future?

"Well, with us in heaven, as well as with you on earth, the certainty that a future awaits us, would operate upon the present more perniciously than an equally strong conviction the other way. The conviction that we exist only in the present would, sooner or later, lead to our making the very best of that present. We should thus, at least, give the Supreme credit for meaning well by us so long as we existed. But we should not have hope, as under the present arrangement—the *may-be*.

"Besides, were our actions weighted with motives derived from the certainty of an hereafter, real morality would be all but impossible. We must love and follow good for its own sake, otherwise we are not fitted to endure. Change of place works no radical change of mind. If we have no love of good here, there is no reason to suppose we should have it there. And if we have it not, how can we desire to perpetuate existences which are devoid of such love?

"Our abode? That is principally on the confines of the atmosphere which encircles the earth. It sustains us as the solider surface of the earth sustains you, and as the sea sustains your ships. Resting on that, we can raise our heads aloft, and inhale the pure ether of space. Our capacity for physical enjoyment is intense. On the ever shifting billows of the outer atmosphere, we shoot upwards or plunge downwards. In it or on it we swim, and glide, and fly, and dive. It is by a process of diving that I am able to penetrate hither to you. Would that I could take you into the far recesses of our world. But your time will come. Thank God, your time will come. At least, it is permitted to hope so.

"Oh no, we never have accidents to hurt us, at least, seriously. We are so carefully trained from infancy to obey the laws of our being, that even when we go on excursions into wild and distant regions, we know, as by a second nature, what to do or to avoid.

"We have no other law than that with which we are born,

the law of sympathy. The springs of all government are within us. They may require developing, but never counteracting."

"Do we never actually do wrong? Well, I can hardly explain. The fact is, we delight in story-books, and we put all our wickedness into them. It is a great safeguard to us, and prevents them from being dull."

The latter remarks were made during Criss's last ascent to the Angelic spheres before quitting his minority. The rest of the conversation had been held at different times.

After thus referring to the power of their sympathetic faculties, the angel paused, and a roseate hue overspread his whole form, and he seemed to Criss as if about to withdraw from him, but in obedience to what emotion, Criss could not divine. Soon he resumed,—

"I ought to have considered that my utterances respecting our nature would excite in you an earnest wish to know more. My perceptions now show me on what your thoughts are dwelling. Your thoughts are pure, or I should not be here. It is not forbidden to me to gratify the desire of the pure.

"Learn, then, that next to the Supreme, and our own Inmost, whereby we come into communion with Him, the most sacred of all things to us is the mystery of the Sex. Its origin is a mystery hidden in the breast of the All-wise. Its method is likewise a mystery. Enough has been revealed to us to show that finite existences are possible only through Duality. It is the eternal and necessary antidote to selfishness. For sex means sympathy, sympathy with likeness in unlikeness. Itself the product of eternal love, it is in its turn the creator and sustainer of love. You, in your manifold contradictions upon earth, once adored the attributes of sex. Then for ages you contemned them, affecting a spirituality which regarded it as an unhappy accident. Then you blasphemed them by suffering a state of society in which the natural sympathies were forced to succumb to conventional exigencies. At last you have attained a condition with which we can sympathize, for you

have restored the affections to their due pre-eminence as the sole basis of morals.

"Some day you will learn to love. With most men love is the product of sex. I believe you more nearly resemble us, with whom sex is the product of love. It may be a hard saying for you to comprehend, but we know not, until love has developed it within us, to what sex we shall belong when we love. Unconsciously to ourselves, our inner nature determines this according to some law which eludes our power of analysis. For no finite being can comprehend its own nature."

Criss noted here that there was something in the tone and aspect of the angel which called forth his own most ardent sympathy, as well as curiosity respecting his visitant's own precise character and condition. It had never before occurred to him to question the sex of his friend. Now, it struck him, there was something that strove for expression; and Criss felt his heart going out towards him in the fulness of intense sympathy. But he did not speak what he felt. The angel was accustomed to read his thoughts, so that utterance was superfluous.

During most of their previous interviews, his friend had been accompanied by another, a slim stripling of middle height—a boy-angel, as it seemed to Criss—whose slight and active form was matched with a playfulness of disposition which was wont to exhibit itself in smart repartees and practical jokes upon Criss and his Ariel; and yet whose eyes and voice indicated a capacity for a feeling deeper than seemed compatible with his boyishness in other respects.

It delighted Criss to witness the strong mutual affection subsisting between the two friends, and to watch the gradual and evident development of the younger from mischievous sprite to laughing fairy; and he wondered whether he ever would attain a character grave and sweet and earnest as that of his tall companion. Now and again would the look of tender devotion which shone through the lad's steel-blue eyes, and diffused itself over his merry countenance, suddenly give place to an

outbreak of the wildest spirits, when his look would become wholly defiant, and his voice break into snatches of joyous song, and his whole bearing become that of a spoilt and wayward child.

Sometimes he would perch himself on the top of Criss's car, and pretending to be jealous of him, declare that he would push him back to the earth. At others he would get beneath it, and seek to give it an impulse upwards, declaring that Criss must come and stay altogether with them in heaven. Of course, he could only make as though he would move the car, for it is quite out of the power of beings so delicately organized and etherially constituted, to exercise a direct and perceptible influence upon the gross elements of earth. At times he appeared to be really jealous of Criss, once even leaving them, and returning home alone, pouting like a sulky girl.

Criss had noticed that of late his tall friend had become graver, and somewhat *distrait*, as if pre-occupied and anxious. And on this occasion there was, as I have stated, something in his demeanor that strangely excited Criss's sympathy. The angel detected his feeling, and understood it better than Criss himself.

"Your sympathy," he at length said, "has won from me something that I have been longing to utter, but shrank from confessing, even to my own kind. With you, attractions are of opposites. Yours are marriages of completion. With us, like attracts like. Ours are marriages of intensification. I doubt whether that which I shall next tell you, will be equally comprehensible to you. I am in the stage in which love is developing my sex. I love and am loved, but neither of us have yet attained assurance which of us will be endowed with masculine, which with feminine, functions. It seems to me that in some way this conversation has hastened the crisis. I have grown bolder since I gave you my confidence; and now I am almost certain that—that—"

And here his form and eyes dilated, and he gazed intently into space. Then Criss thought he heard a rustling, but he saw nothing. Presently his angel-friend opened wide his arms,

and with a bound there entered into them another angel of smaller dimensions, fuller and more delicate outlines, with long flowing hair that seemed to him like the mingling of sunbeam and gold-dust. The face was hidden in the breast of the other, as each clasped each, and only a tiny luminous foot appeared beneath the alabastrous skirt; but that foot convinced Criss that his friend need no longer doubt which province of being he was to occupy in the new dispensation upon which he had entered.

And as Criss gazed at them still clasping each other in blissful trance, the air around became instinct with life, and strains of music reached his ears, and those of the new-comer also; for *She* raised her head from the breast where it had been hidden; a face, one glimpse of which told even Criss's duller—because still human—faculties that every thrill and pulse of her being appertained to the feminine. She raised her face and uttered a little cry,—half of timidity, half of amusement:

"We are caught! we are caught! Oh, where shall we hide from them?"

For even among angels the first impulse of love for the one, is to conceal itself from the many.

But the joy of the angels over a new-found affinity extends far and wide, and is too vivid to be repressed; and so they had sought out these, diving after them to the lower airs where they held converse with Criss.

And then, surrounded by congratulating friends, and strains of wedding-music, the celestial marriage party,—the bride still clasped in her bridegroom's arms,—soared aloft to their own abiding-place, and disappeared from Criss's sight.

But the unutterable fairness of the face of which he had caught a glimpse, remained indelibly impressed upon his memory. It was the face of the boy-angel, as Criss had once deemed him; now by the force of love developed into the woman, and lit up with all the devotion and beauty which constitutes the special appanage of her sex, no matter in what sphere of existence.

CHAPTER II.

Criss determined to spend the last days of his minority with his foster-father. It happened that Bertie was much occupied in carrying out a scheme of immigration for the government of Patagonia; and, induced by tempting offers, large numbers of settlers were leaving Central Africa for the bracing climate and fertile slopes of the Southern Cordilleras.

The ill-will beginning to be manifested towards the whites on the African plateau, especially in the districts immediately around the capital, and the Bornouse and Sakatos districts of Central Soudan, contributed also to the movement. Many of the richer class of emigrants adopted the easy and rapid journey aloft, and thereby escaped the discomforts and risks of the unwholsome low coast country; but the majority, together with all heavy goods, were carried by sea, embarking near the mouth of the river Niger.

There was in reality no hardship about the sea-journey, except to people accustomed to the exquisite ease of air travel. Our ancestors even of a few generations back, would have been filled with envy could they have foreseen the enormous improvements in the construction of ships, which a cheap motive power has enabled us to make. It is difficult for us to realize the fact that people used to traverse the ocean by the aid of the wind alone, or at best impelled by steam, produced by the combustion of coal; the stock of this article requisite for a long voyage occupying two-thirds of a vessel's whole carrying capacity; and the vessel itself riding upon a single keel, at the mercy of every change in the level of the water, and the decks lying so low that the waves frequently washed over them! What would they have said could they have beheld the huge ferries, rather than ships, in which, raised high upon sharp, parallel keels, and propelled by rows of wheels and screws, we swiftly pass and re-pass the ocean in crowds, scarce knowing by any movement whether it is storm or calm!

The sea now has few terrors for voyagers. The danger of fire, indeed, cannot be altogether abolished, though it is reduced to a minimum. Neither are collisions, either with each other or with icebergs, altogether unknown; and when these do happen, the tremendous pace at which our vessels move is apt to produce catastrophies which are terrible indeed.

In the event to which the course of my narrative now brings me, both these dangers befel a vessel bound from the west coast of Africa to Patagonia, having on board a large party of emigrants. The clash occurred in the mid South Atlantic, and while the two floating cities were inextricably crushed and entangled together, and their machinery in a state of utter disorganization, a fire broke out, and threatened everything with utter destruction.

The first act of the authorities on board in such an emergency is always to dispatch a boat to pick up a wire of the floating telegraph, and summon aid from the nearest port. This was accordingly done, and then as many of the passengers as possible were lowered into the life-boats, to await, at a safe distance from the burning wreck, the arrival of aid. To the dismay of all, it was found that the boats could not accommodate the entire party, so that several still remained upon the burning vessels.

Among these were an elderly man and his daughter, who had emigrated from the Scotch Highlands to the mountain settlement on the slopes of Atlantika, in Soudan, and were now, after some years' residence there, starting on a new venture in a climate and country more nearly resembling their own.

The daughter, a girl of sixteen, had by her marvellous beauty and fascinating vivacity, won vast admiration from all on board. To the old, she was a warm and glancing sunbeam; to the young, she was a realization of their most ardent dreams of joy and love.

The father made a strange contrast with his daughter. He was a hard-featured, tall, saturnine, reserved, unbending man. They stood together now, on the edge of the blazing flotilla, watching the receding and overladen boats.

On the crowded benches of these was many a young man who, during the brief sojourn at sea, had learnt to regard the fair Scotch lassie with feelings akin to adoration, but in the excitement of the catastrophe had forgotten everything but self-preservation. It must be said on their behalf, that the forbidding aspect of the father had kept them all at too great a distance to allow of anything like an intimacy.

Presently a cry arose from them—

"Nannie! we must save Nannie! Jump, Nannie, and we will pick you up!"

Nannie's face brightened for a moment, less at the idea of being saved, than in pride of conquest. Mechanically she looked up into her father's face. The grim resolution she read there arrested her impulse to fling herself into the water, as bidden by her admirers in the boats.

And now between those who were for saving Nannie, and those who were eager to get further from the burning wrecks, a clamor arose. The old Scotchman made no sign to guide her. The resolution with which she adhered to his side touched him not. The fact was, he loved her not. His was only the self-love of a cold, austere disposition. How such a fair, tender wild-flower had ever come to spring upon the bleak mountain side of a nature like his, was a mystery even to himself. He saw nothing of himself in her; and in his heart he reproached her with being all her mother's—that mother who had pined away beneath his chilling influence, and, after producing three fair and lovely daughters, was buried in the Highland home, which soon afterwards he deserted for the slopes of Atlantika. One daughter had recently died; another, the eldest, was married and settled in Africa; and he was now taking this one, and all his possessions, to the new settlements in South America.

Untrained by discipline, and unregulated by reason, Nannie was entirely a creature of impulse. She knew neither fear for herself, nor love for her father; but some blind instinct made her say to herself,

"At least, if he cannot love me, he shall not be ashamed of me."

So, in reply to those who bade her jump and be saved, she calmly took her father's hand, and said,

"Not alone! I cannot be saved by myself!"

Then she whispered to him,

"Father, shall we jump? I am sure they will save us both."

"Do as you please," was his reply. "For myself, I have never in my life accepted a favor from any man, and I am too old to begin now."

Nannie was terribly perplexed. She had always been ready to accept, and eager to serve, and she understood not her father's disposition.

Her attention was drawn from her perplexity by another shout, differing altgether in character from the last, for there was in it a tone of joyousness.

Above the crackling of the flames was heard the sound of a signal, exploding at a distance; then another, nearer; and another, so much louder as to indicate that they proceeded from a swift ship of the air, and no comparatively slow toiler of the sea.

All listened and looked intently. Presently a tiny aëromotive settled down upon the water between the boats and the blazing wreck. Its diminutiveness caused a thrill of disappointment in every breast. Adapted but for one or two persons, it was evidently incapable of aiding in the present dreadful emergency. But a clear voice arose from it, saying,

"Take courage! A fleet of aëromotives will soon be here. I have outstripped it, to give you notice. But I can save one now, at once. Will anyone come with me?"

It was Christmas Carol who spoke. He had joined Bertie on his last trip with the emigrants, and they were now on their way home together over the Atlantic. The glare of the conflagration had reached them at a vast distance, when high up in the air, whither they had ascended in order to escape the contrary trade winds. Criss was travelling in his Ariel, and keeping company with the convoy, when he caught sight of the fire. He only paused to shout to Bertie that it must be a ship that

was burning, and that he would hurry on, and announce the coming of the rest.

In answer to his question, "Will anyone come with me?" there rose once more the cry,—

"Nannie! Nannie! Save yon fair-haired lassie!"

In a moment he had risen from the water, and was grasping the rail at the edge of the burning deck, against which the remaining passengers were crowded together. There was no need to ask which was Nannie. The looks of all sufficiently indicated her, as, clad in little beside her long white night-dress and flowing golden hair, she stood mute and trembling by her father's side.

"Have a little patience," said Criss to the poor people, "you will all be taken off soon. Come, little one," he added to Nannie, "I will take you safely anywhere you wish to go."

Scarce knowing what she did, she took his hand and stepped into the car, her father being apparently too bewildered to be capable of any decision.

"Where would you like to find her?" asked Criss of the old man.

"At her sister's," was the tardy response.

"Very good," said Criss; "at her sister's, wherever that may be, you shall find her safe. When the convoy comes, tell the leader that he is to bring you thither as soon as possible. Good bye!" And amid a ringing shout he darted aloft, bearing Nannie with him.

She, on her side, seemed to partake of the general stupefaction. The shouting and the rapidity of the ascent recalled her to consciousness.

"Oh, my father! my father!" she cried, "do save my father!"

"Fear not for him, little one," said Criss. "See! yonder come the great air-ships, in time to save them all. Their captain is a good kind man, and will soon bring your father to you—to us—for I shall not leave you until I see you safe with him."

His voice re-assured her, as no voice had ever before done, and allayed the beating of her wild and eager heart.

"But when and where will that be?" she asked.

"At your sister's? Did you not hear him say so?"

"You are going to take me all that way? and by ourselves too?"

"I do not know where, or how far 'all that way' may be; but I intend to take you every inch of it, no matter where. By the way, what is your sister's address?"

"The Elephant Farm, Yolo, Mount Atlantika, Central Africa."

"Very good, then. At the Elephant Farm, Yolo, Mount Atlantika, Central Africa, you will in a few hours have the pleasure of meeting your father."

And glancing at the stars, Criss turned a handle and gave the Ariel an easterly direction.

"And now," he said, "as we are no longer going upwards, but horizontally, and shall meet the air more rapidly, you had better let me put some of these wrappers round you. The tropical dress you brought from the ship is hardly sufficient for this elevation."

And he opened a locker in the compartment of the car, where they were together.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the child, "I quite forgot I had so little on. I escaped from my berth in such haste, that I had no time to think of shoes or stockings. See!" she cried, half hysterically, thrusting out the tiniest white foot from beneath the scanty dress.

"Well," said Criss, "so long as we can keep you warm, we need not trouble ourselves about being smart up here. The angels are not particular about dress, and besides they know how to make allowances for poor mortals of earth, so that they will not be affronted."

He saw that the poor child was disposed to whimper over the scantiness of her attire; but the way he took it relieved her vastly.

"I do think," she said, "that you must be an angel. You don't laugh at me as any other man would have done. Had it been Frank, I should never have heard the last of it."

"Well," said Criss, "I do live a good deal in the sky, so perhaps I am on the road towards being one. Probably 'Frank' would tell you that you do not require such a course to convert you into one also. Is it not so?"

Nannie smiled and shook her head.

"Frank is my brother-in-law, and I suspect he knows me too well to think anything of the sort," she remarked.

"I am glad," resumed Criss, "to find you are not timid at travelling in this way. Have you ever been aloft before?"

"Oh no! I should have been frightened out of my senses had I known I was going to do it; but it all happened in such a hurry that I forgot to be frightened. And—and—somehow, you make one forget one's fears. Why, I am not even frightened at finding myself all alone up here with a perfect stranger, and with only these few things on. I can't think why it is."

Her artless ways and wondrous beauty delighted Criss. He saw that she was yet more child than woman, though, perhaps, carrying on her childhood somewhat further than usual into the domain of womanhood. He divined in some degree the grounds of her confidence, and he argued from it that she had a true and genuine nature.

"No one ever thinks of being frightened in heaven," he said; "and while here you must be an angel in courage, as well as in everything else, including a short allowance of clothing."

"Not even of the other—the—the—gentlemen angels?" she asked, with an arch look, which broke into a smile, and spread like a glory of sunshine over her whole face, till Criss fairly gasped at the memory it recalled. For she exactly resembled the bride-angel of whose face he had caught a glimpse at the supreme moment of her rapture.

"Why you are the exact image of an angel," exclaimed Criss. "No wonder you take so naturally to heaven."

"And are you one, too?" asked Nannie.

"Now that is a point I shall leave you to determine by experience," said Criss. "But I shall insist on your eating some-

thing now, and then lying down and going to sleep. The angels do not neglect those duties, I assure you. So, after you have eaten some of these dried fruits and biscuits, and drank a glass of this liqueur, I shall expect you to lie down on this couch, and sleep very soundly as long as you can."

"And what becomes of you?" she asked.

"Oh, I have another compartment on the other side of this panel, which I occupy sometimes. But for to-night I am going to stay up overhead in the rigging, where I have a little nest, and shall not be near enough to disturb you."

And he proceeded to feed her with tender assiduity, yet not so as to excite any sense of strangeness or difference, and thereby throw her back upon herself.

Then he spread some furs for her on the little couch, and bidding her be sure to call him if she wanted anything, he took one of her hands in one of his, and pressed his other hand on her head, and seemed for a few moments to be murmuring something, as if in blessing or in prayer; while his eyes covered her with a grave and kindly glance, which allayed whatever still remained of tremor at the novelty of her position.

"Do you think you will sleep well?" he enquired.

"Oh, yes, soundly. But—but—" and her look and voice wandered, as if uncertain what it was she wished to say.

"I can guess what you were thinking of," said Criss, softly. "You were wishing for the accustomed kiss before going to bed."

"Everybody who used to kiss me died long ago," said Nannie. "But I was feeling as if I should like to be said *good night* to properly, for once. Though I am sure I don't know how you knew it."

Criss saw that a spell was working on her to compel a deep sleep, and that to balk her longing would break it. He wished her to sleep during the swift passage through the keen upper airs, by which he intended to make for the land.

"Give me both your hands, and look straight into my eyes," he said. "And now tell me, Nannie (you see, I couldn't help knowing your name, when all those people called it out so

loudly—it is the only name of yours I know), tell me, do you trust me entirely?"

"I suppose I must, as I can't help myself," she said, with a look half saucy and half sleepy.

"Then, for being a good girl, and not letting yourself be frightened, I give you this kiss, by way of saying good night 'properly,' and after it you must sleep soundly as long as you can."

As he spoke, her head inclined towards him, and he pressed a kiss upon her brow. Then springing up into the rigging, he left her to herself. After a short consultation with his chart and his compass, and ascertaining his position, he turned his lamp downwards, and glanced at his passenger, and was delighted to see that she was in a profound sleep.

CHAPTER III.

KNOWING the resources within reach of the shipwrecked folks, Criss did not further trouble himself about them. It only required tolerably fine weather to save them from discomfort during the few days it would take for aid to reach them from the nearest port, and such weather they were likely to have at that season in those seas.

The scene of the catastrophe lay about mid-way between the two continents; so that the distance he must traverse in order to place Nannie in her sister's arms, was about thirty degrees of east longitude, and forty-five of north latitude. At his ordinary speed, this would take him the best part of twenty-four hours; but a pause might be necessary, both for the purpose of obtaining the precise situation of the place of his destination, and to avoid arriving in the night. Besides, Criss had never before carried a passenger of feminine gender, and he had a vague notion that all such were a kittle sort of cattle, and likely

to require things with which he was altogether unprovided, and which were obtainable only on land, and in civilized places.

So, observing that he was in the precise latitude of the Orange River, and that this was also the nearest point of the continent, he determined to make straight for the land, where he would be within reach of anything Nannie might require; and then run northwards to Soudan, keeping between the fifteenth and twentieth parallels of longitude.

It was night again when he sighted the coast, and saw the broad silver streak of the great South African stream far below him.

Nannie had slept the whole day; but now, after a few uneasy movements, she woke, and murmured some words, the meaning of which he could not catch. Then, remembering what had happened, she called to him, a little querulously, he thought,

"Mr. Angel! are you there?"

"All right," returned Criss, descending to her. "What a nice long sleep you have had."

"Long! Why, it isn't day yet. And oh, I am so hungry."

"You have a right to be," said Criss; "for you have slept all night and all day too, until it is night again."

"And have we been travelling all the time? Have you not been asleep too?"

"Well, you have lost nothing by sleeping so long," he said; "for we have been traversing the monotonous ocean. But now, if you are quite awake, and are not afraid to look out, you will see one of the prettiest sights in the world; for you will see the earth asleep, and the glimmer of lights on the land, and the sheen of stars in the rivers, and the outlines of hills, and railways, and plantations. For we have reached Africa, in its rich and populous districts of the South. See yonder bright cluster of lights; that is the capital—the great city of Orange. To-morrow we shall be going northwards, towards your home; but you must let me know if you want anything likely to be got in shops, before we go far in that direction, as the white people don't extend all the way."

"Oh, yes, thank you. I shall like so much to go shopping," cried Nannie; "but—but I have no money!"

"That, I assure you, is of no consequence," said Criss, laughing. "The Ariel's passengers never feel the want of that. Why, Nannie, what is wrong now?" for she was beginning to cry.

"I can't go shopping like this," she said piteously, looking at the rough wrapper with which she was covered. "One always puts on one's best things to go shopping in."

"Well," said Criss, "that is a difficulty, certainly, as even with that elegant poncho on you, the people would be sure to remark something unusual. It would hardly do for me to leave the Ariel in your charge, while I went shopping for you. But if you really dislike to go to your sister as you are, I will tell you what we can do. I will descend nearly to the earth, over some town, and let down a line with a message and some money, and they will send up whatever we order, without knowing anything at all about us."

"Oh, do; that will be charming," cried Nannie. "And even if the things don't fit, I shall not look quite so foolish when I get home. I can't bear to be laughed at."

So they journeyed slowly northwards, so as not to be beyond a white town when morning came, Nannie undertaking in the meantime to make out a list of the things she wanted.

At first on looking down through the aperture provided for that purpose, Nanny declared that she could see nothing, and that it made her quite giddy. Criss urged her to persevere, saying she would soon get used to it, and that she must practice now in order to be his guide when they neared her home. At the same time he let the Ariel approach nearer to the earth.

Nanny was delighted when she found she could look down without being giddy.

"I see everything quite well."

"It shows," said Criss, "what a sedate character yours must be, when you can so easily get rid of giddiness."

"They call me *wild-cat*, at home," she said, "and declare that I shall never be anything else than giddy. And it is quite true, I assure you it is. Oh, I am such a wicked creature. There's no mischief I wouldn't do, when I am in the mind for it."

"But you can be equally good and kind and nice, at other times, to balance it, I am sure."

"I can do anyone a kindness, if I like them. But I am not allowed to like any I should like to like. My father is very strict with me; much more so than he was with my sisters. He says I am different from them in disposition, though we are not so very much unlike in other ways. If you heard my sister speak, I am sure you would think it was me."

"Is your sister fair, too?"

"Yes, and the loveliest little creature in the world. You will be sure to think me ugly when you have seen her. But she is not so little, after all, when you come to look at her. Only there is something so delicate and fairy-like about all her ways, that one doesn't see how big she really is."

"And I suppose she is as happy as a wife and mother, as you hope to be some day?"

"Oh, Frank dotes on her; more than she deserves, I think; for I don't see that she is so much better than I am. Are you married?"

"No; I consider myself but as a boy, yet. The week after next will be my birthday, when I shall come of age; and I shall be at home with my friends."

"So you will be going away from us almost directly after we arrive. I wish you were not going to see my sister. You won't think anything of me then."

Morning broke while they were still chattering, for being near Christmas time, it was high summer in those latitudes, and soon the flood of daylight enabled them to see every detail of the country beneath and around them, down to its houses and gardens, and tiny irrigated rills, and patches of dark woods; and Nanny said she wished her father had settled in that beautiful country, among people of his own color, instead of in the hot, central parts. And then she exclaimed,—

"How surprised Mattie will be to see me. She thought she had got rid of me for ever. I wonder what father will do: whether he will give up his plan of settling in America, and stay at Yolo."

Criss suggested that it would probably depend on the amount of loss he might have had by the wreck.

"Oh," cried Nannie, "I never thought of that. He had everything he owned in the world with him. And so had I, and—and ——" And here she broke into an agony of tears. Presently she resumed:

"I have lost all my nice clothes; and perhaps father won't be able to buy me more; and Mattie hates my taking hers. She says they are too smart for me. Oh, dear! what shall I do! I dread now going back to her. Of course, we shan't be able to get anything on the way fit to be seen in. And now I think of it, it will be such fun to arrive with only these things on. She must let me have some of hers then. She will be so mad. But I know what will reconcile her. She likes beautiful men. When she sees you, she will be reconciled."

And, full of this last notion, she decided that she would not purchase anything on the way.

This character, so new to Criss, needed a key, for which, just now, he had little leisure to seek. But while he was at a loss to harmonize her utterances, he was at no loss to derive huge satisfaction from the contemplation of her wonderfully mobile and expressive face, through which every variation of thought and mood showed itself in sunniest smiles,—a smile not restricted to the region of the mouth, but which was equally in her eyes and all over her face,—or a petulant pout. Her intense and thorough vitality produced perpetual motion in her mind, and a corresponding activity in her body.

"I never could have believed," she said to Criss, "that I could have kept still so long in such a little place as this, without jumping out. I believe it is only because the car itself keeps always moving so fast, that I am able to remain in it."

Certainly, the energy and vivacity of every limb and feature did irresistibly indicate that every inch of her was thoroughly alive, and so Criss told her.

"Yes," she said, complacently. "I am not a log. My grandmother in Scotland used always to call me a restless penn'orth."

Presently she said,—

"How fond you must be of travelling in the air. I am sure father never tried it, or he would not have called it wicked."

"Is that why he hesitated when I offered to take you off the wreck? I thought it was merely bewilderment and alarm."

"It was partly all of them, I think," returned Nannie. "He says it is presumptuous in man to traverse the skies like a bird, as Providence never intended us to do so, or it would have given us wings."

"Dear me!" said Criss, "Do such notions prevail in Scotland, at this time of day?"

"Well, not generally, I believe; but father always keeps to 'the good old paths,' as he calls them, and says he is one of 'the Remnant,'—though what that is, I am sure I don't know. And he hates to associate with people who follow modern ways. I never knew him make friends with anybody. He calls himself one of the true old Highland stock, and thinks no one good enough for him. Oh, he is so proud, is my father. I believe it was his pride, as much as his jealousy, that killed my mother."

Criss did not care to draw the child out respecting her father's faults of character, though he felt not a little curious to learn the circumstances which had combined to produce such a nature as hers. He was aware that the great burst of free thought with which, about the beginning of the twentieth century, Scotland had astonished the world, had left, as in England, a small section of its people comparatively untouched. So he only remarked,—

"With such views, it must have gone very much against the grain with your father to leave his home and travel by railway and electric ship."

"Oh, no. Why? Everybody has done that for ever so long. It is only the air-travelling he thinks wrong."

"Ah, I understood you to say that he holds it right to use only the bodily faculties with which we are born, and not seek to improve upon them."

"Well," she said, evidently perplexed, "I suppose it is not

being used to things that often makes people think them presumptuous and wrong."

"The earth looks as if it were dropping away below us! What makes it do that?"

Nannie's exclamation was due to the sudden and rapid ascent of the Ariel. For the sun had risen high, and they were entering upon a region where it was necessary to ascend in quest of cooler air. Criss had deflected from his direct course in order to obtain a view of that region so long a mystery to the world, which extends from equatorial Africa due south through the centre of the continent, and contains, inextricably interlaced, the sources of the three great rivers, the Congo, the Zambesi, and the Nile, and of the series of marshes which cover almost the whole of Nigritia—a region now known as the headquarters of the greatest of black civilizations, and richest of all countries in vegetable and mineral production.

Nannie had told Criss at what hour on the morrow she would prefer to arrive at her sister's—it was the hour at which she would be likely to find her alone—and there was plenty of time to make the detour. So they passed over the mountain ranges which stretched far away to the east and west; and Criss pointed out to her the diverging streams and told her of their ultimate destination, and of the long impenetrable mystery of the Nile, and of the famous traveller who, in ages long past, had devoted himself to its discovery, and to the abrogation of the dreadful trade in human beings which had made that fair region a very place of torment for millions of people throughout hundreds of generations.

At length they reached a vast and busy tract, teeming with rivers and lakes, fields and factories, railways and electro-ships, and all the other signs which indicate the neighborhood of a great capital; and then a large and gorgeous city burst upon their view.

"That," said Criss, "is a city with the name of which you must be familiar. The people of the country call it after a countryman of yours—the traveller to whom I was referring

just now—and whom they justly regarded as their deliverer and benefactor, and who holds the first place in their sacred calendar. For that is the city of *St. Livingstone.*"

"Dear me!" cried Nannie, "I never knew he was a real man. My father says there never were such people as the Saints, but that their names and histories were invented to suit some fancy."

"The same has been said of this one," replied Criss; "and the very name has been adduced as a proof of the unreality of his history. For mankind has always regarded *stones* with superstitious veneration, and from the earliest ages made them objects of worship. The Bible tells of Abraham and Jacob and the Israelites paying respect to stones. The ancient Greeks represented the earth as re-peopled from stones thrown by Pyrrha and Deucalion after the flood. The founder of the Christian religion was called a corner-stone, and the famous church of that denomination was said to be founded upon a stone, for such was the signification of Peter's name. There was also the Caaba, the sacred stone which symbolized the ancient worship of Arabia. Not to tire you with too many instances, the great German people ascribe their rise to the Baron von Stein, or Stone, who first drilled them and made them a nation of soldiers and able to withstand the French. And now we find a *living stone* the patron saint, deity almost, of all this region of Africa. Yet there is good reason to believe that he was a real man; as probably were some of the others I have named."

It was night when they passed the equator. Criss was now steering straight for the mountain on which Nannie's relations dwelt.—*Atlantika*—which reared its ten thousand feet at a distance of some two hundred miles south of the Bornouse capital on Lake Tchad, the metropolis and centre of the empire of Soudan, or Central Africa. A long stretch of mountain, marsh and desert, separated the empire from the more southern communities they had just left; the principal characteristic of the region being its vast system of waters, which find their chief outlet through the process of evaporation. The continent here

is divided mainly into two great valleys. Through one runs the Nile, which after forcing its way through the Libyan desert, and depositing a kingdom on the route, finds an exit into the Mediterranean. The other, consisting of immense and nearly level alluvial tracts, forms a series of vast swamps, through which runs one continuous stream, whose sources lie contiguous to those of the Nile, and whose termination is in Lake Tchad and the great marshy region which there bounds the Sahara. Looking at this region with the eyes of his guardian, Avenil, Criss said to himself,

"What a country, if only it were properly drained!"

Nannie was awake with the dawn, and eagerly straining her eyes to catch sight of the mountain. At first she insisted that every hill she saw was Atlantika, so excited did the thought of her return make her. But Criss turned to his own reckonings rather than to her reminiscences of what, from that point of view, she had never beheld, and therefore was unlikely to recognize.

Towards noon, Nannie's recognitions and Criss's calculations showed symptoms of reconciliation. The Ariel flew low as it passed round the eastern side of the mountain, towards the northern slope where the settlement lay. At length the Elephant Farm appeared plainly but a little way off; with, to Nannie's great surprise and disappointment, the whole of her sister's family assembled on the lawn, pointing upwards and gesticulating as if on the watch for her.

"Tell me," said Criss, "is the garden wired over, or can we descend into it?"

Nannie asked what he meant.

"At home," he said, "we have to place strong network fences of wire over any place we wish to keep private from aërialists. If your garden is fenced so, we cannot go down into it."

Nannie declared that she had never heard of such a thing in that country, and that she believed ballooning was not allowed or not practised there.

"But look!" she exclaimed; "they see us and expect us, and I wanted to surprise them."

A few moments more, and the car touched the ground in the midst of the excited party, and Nannie, stepping out of it, was embraced by one, who to Criss seemed another Nannie, only a little older and fuller in figure, so strong was the likeness between the two sisters. There was the same wealth of golden hair, the same broad fair brow, the same quick and laughing grey-blue eyes, the same vivacity of glance, the same exquisitely formed mouth and chin, and clever little nose, the same determined little thumb, lithe figure, and daintily-turned limbs.

A fine, pleasant-looking man, the husband, whom Criss already knew as Frank, then came forward and welcomed and thanked Criss, saying he presumed he was the Carol named in the telegram he had received from mid-ocean, and placed in his hands another addressed to him, which proved to be from Bertie.

From this he learnt that Nannie's father had, with the rest of the passengers, preferred to continue the journey to South America, the Patagonian government having, on being communicated with from the scene of the wreck, undertaken to provide for them on their arrival, and dispatched a swift vessel to convey them all thither. Bertie added that after landing his own party of the rescued on the American coast, he should steer homewards to keep his appointment for Christmas-eve with Criss and his fellow-trustees.

The message from the old Scotchman to his married daughter, was to the effect that he had lost nearly everything, except his life; and that as he was too proud to come back to be a burden to his children, he should accept the offers of the Patagonian government, and do the best he could for himself in South America. If Nannie ever reached them—of which he had great doubts, notwithstanding the high character Mr. Greathead gave him of the young man Carol, for steadiness and skill—he hoped she would not be too great a trouble to them. But he would write at length on reaching his destination, which he hoped to do without further mishap, as a vessel had been

dispatched to their aid, and he was not one rash enough to tempt Providence by travelling in a machine so contrary to nature as an air-ship.

CHAPTER IV.

The European settlements in Soudan, of which that on Mount Atlantika was the chief, while rich and flourishing as communities, were, as regards their civilization, somewhat in arrear of Europe itself. Many fashions, old and discarded elsewhere as the excesses of unpractical enthusiasts, were here still in full vigor. To Criss it was like going back to the times he had read of in history, to find women claiming, not merely equality, but identity, with men, in all the affairs of life, political as well as social.

Educated in the self-same schools, and on the self-same system, as the boys, and taught to have precisely the same contempt for all pomps and vanities, they devoted themselves as equally a matter of course to grave and industrial pursuits, working in the farm, the factory, and the office, on the plough and the locomotive, in the legislature and the police (for the white communities of Soudan enjoyed the privilege of conducting in their own fashion whatever affairs exclusively affected themselves), and would hold a rifle, and go through military drill, and had no manner of doubt that, if called on, they would exhibit on the battle-field a prowess little, if at all, inferior to that of the men.

In a state of society in which woman cared more to be sensible than ornamental, and men valued them for their uses rather than for their graces, for their robustness rather than their delicacy and tenderness, and mere esteem had taken the place of love, and the general aspect of life was grey and sober; the sensation had been one akin to consternation, which was created by these young Scotch girls, who, from the moment of their

arrival, bade resolute defiance to all established rules of decorum.

At first the elders of the community felt strong in the conviction that they had educated the youth of both sexes far too well for them to suffer from so evil an example. But when they saw the effect produced by the wondrous beauty of face and form of the new arrivals, their witching ways of scorn or merriment: their reckless abandon of manner and speech: their utter contempt for the useful, and instinctive devotion to the charming, as the one thing needful or desirable in their sex; and saw, too, that even the gravest and most practical of their sons were unable to resist the fascination,—they were moved to indignation and wrath, and ceased not to utter warnings against all association with "the witches of Atlantika."

These on their part enjoyed the commotion they were only too conscious of having created. They knew that none could say any harm of them, save that they were pretty girls, and scorned to be anything else. Too heedless and untaught, save in the young ways of their own inbred nature, they scarce knew the source of their power, but felt that, somehow, in them a tribute was being paid to Womanhood it failed to obtain elsewhere around them; and it was nothing to them if it were paid at the expense of "civilization." And the whole career of these girls certainly was a veritable triumph of womanhood,—womanhood in its simple freshness and genuineness: pure from the hands of nature; wild and untamable in its utter unconsciousness of ill; haughty and proud in its conscious superiority to all arts; and winning and joyous in its wish to please, and its confidence of inability to fail to do so, even when making most strenuous efforts to be disagreeable.

The father was utterly powerless to comprehend or restrain the exuberant natures of his daughters. As children, there was no garden, wood, or meadow, where they would not wilfully trespass and stray. As maidens, there was no heart they would not win, and make merry with. As women,—ah, the thought of what they would be as women, sometimes made him hate the very beauty that served to remind him of the mother his own hardness had done to death.

At length some one was found bold enough to seriously wish to marry the elder of the sisters; a man of good repute for sense and substance, the owner of an extensive elephant-nursery, and valuable ivory-works; honest, straightforward, good-looking, and highly regarded, even by the father himself. It was even more astonishing to the latter to find his daughter readily accepting the offer, at so low a rate had he estimated her good sense. But his surprise was as nothing compared to that of the whole community when Mattie insisted on being married out and out, at once, without any provision for a trial of compatibilities, and without any of the usual settlements of property on herself separately. When remonstrated with, and told that such confiding generosity was a culpable weakness, and a wanton throwing of temptation in a man's way, she said that she was a woman, and had a right to be weak if she liked; that the other women of the place might turn themselves into men if they chose; but that she believed any true woman knew a true man when she saw one, and that if she could not trust a man altogether, she would not trust him at all; and she did trust Frank Hazeltine.

Her lover would not be outdone in generosity, and accepted her with the same absence of all the usual safeguards and precautions. And so they became man and wife in the simple fashion of old times, when there were no marriage-settlements, no separation clauses, no woman's rights. In short, they took each other for better or for worse, and agreed to swim or sink together. And the only member of her own sex in the wide country round that approved of their conduct, was the rebellious and defiant Nannie.

It was with a grim satisfaction that the old Scotchman saw his daughter taken off his hands. He liked Hazeltine, but he was too confident of Mattie's powers to plague, to consider him a subject for envy. He soon learnt to hope that she would plague him, for he conceived a profound distrust of Hazeltine so soon as he realized the fact that his wife loved him. The father felt himself supplanted in his daughter's affections! His jealousy blazed out afresh when he found that Nannie pre-

ferred her sister's home to her own. Altogether, he was so ill at ease that he determined to leave the country. It was not through any wish for Nannie's company that he took her with him. Indeed, he probably would have left her with the Hazeltines, but the eagerness with which both they and Nannie welcomed the arrangement, decided the old man against it.

All that Criss saw during his brief sojourn at the Farm, was an exquisitely lovely woman retaining in maternity all the charms of girlhood; and an exquisitely lovely girl, not yet matron, and apparently as fancy-free as any young spring-bok of the country; and so given to inconsistent extremes of conduct, so incalculable in her moods, that she would hardly bestow upon him a kind look or civil speech, until he went to take leave of her, and then she burst into a flood of passionate tears.

Criss was moving away distressed and perplexed at a phenomenon so strange and unexpected. But Nannie darted at him, and declared vehemently that if he said a word to her sister or anyone else about her crying, she would kill him first and then herself; and that she believed she only cried because she had been so preternaturally good all the time she had been in the Ariel with him, and ever since, that she must make up for it somehow.

CHAPTER V.

In the anticipation of his coming birthday, Criss had matter enough for thought, while pursuing his journey homeward, for he knew that he was then to be put in possession of his history and parentage so far as they were known, and be called upon to determine his career. But his mind refused to dwell upon aught save the face which he recognized as at once the face of the bride-angel and of the fair child he had

rescued from the wreck, and left crying passionately at his departure. No matter whether he flew high or low; whether he swooped toward earth, so near as to catch the voices of his fellow men; or soared toward heaven, where he was wont to hold sweet intercourse with his spiritual kinsfolk, nothing seemed to him to be the same as it had been before. He felt as an invalid, into whose darkened chamber a single errant sunbeam has forced its way, not to cheer, but to distract.

Soon the waters of Lake Tchad opened their wide expanse to his view. The sight recalled him to the fears he had heard uttered respecting the disturbed political state of the country. He had an idea of descending to the capital to obtain information, for his new friends, the settlers in Atlantika, were very uneasy on the subject. They considered themselves in danger.

On approaching the city, he perceived a commotion. People and troops were in rapid movement. Smoke and flames were rising from some of the principal buildings. In place of descending at once, he decided to approach only near enough to obtain information of what was going on. On perceiving him the multitude sent up a great cry. He paused a few score feet over their heads, and let down a cord with a label appended, bearing the words, "Any mails for Europe?" as was the custom with air-couriers.

A message was sent up, saying that no mails were ready; that there was a revolution in Soudan; that the Emperor had disappeared, and that a large sum was offered for his capture. It was his palace that was in flames. But the accompanying newspapers would tell all the news, the principal item of which was the establishment of a republic. No further disturbance was expected, unless the Emperor should return with a force. The republic meant peace, economy, and fraternity.

Criss continued his journey re-assured. Soon the vast and fertile alluvial tracts began to give place to patches of sand; the growing temperature of the blasts of hot air which now continually assailed him, told him that he was approaching a region which not even modern skill and enterprise had

attempted to redeem from its ancient reproach of being the most arid and baneful region in the world—the vast and dreaded Sahara, dreariest portion of the dreary waste that stretches from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. It opened upon him now, the sandy ocean of the illimitable desert, whose ceaseless and burning billows none could traverse, save at the risk of being overwhelmed and scorched to death. A curse to itself, and a curse to two continents, whose climate it marred, pitilessly mocking man's longing for more of the fair earth on which to rear homes for his children, the Sahara bade defiance alike to the plough, the railway, and the canal, and seemed even to resent the passage above it of the swift-winged aëromotive of our times; for it whirled far aloft columns of fine sand, which blinded the aëronaut and clogged the delicate works of his machinery. "Why," thought Criss, as he began to recognize the influences of this mysterious region, "why did not the subterranean forces of the earth heave it a few hundred feet higher, and give man another continent for his use, or leave it a few hundred feet lower, and give him another sea? Is it as a perpetual challenge to man, to prove his impotence or his puissance, that nature has bequeathed him such a legacy?

Criss has got far within the limits of the dreaded desert, when morning breaks. The night has been perfectly calm, and the air is clear and free from dust. Fascinated and attracted by the place and its reputation, he flies low and leisurely along. A sea of sand! Surely it must be the watery ocean itself that rolls beneath him, boiling and bubbling in vast blue billows, as far as the eye can reach. He descends towards it to examine the phenomenon more closely. The air becomes hotter as he does so, but there is not a breath of wind to account for the motion of the billows, which he sees rolling over and over each other as if propelled upwards from beneath. The red sun rises, and straitway the tossing ocean beneath him mingles crimson and gold with its blue, as he has never known the ocean of waters to do, nor even the clouds of the air over which he has been wont to ride. He arrests his downward course, but the many-colored billows seem to rise towards him. Already he

descries their gleams and sprays shooting past him. Now the billows themselves are around and above him. He is engulphed, and yet he breathes freely. Ah! It is a mirage of the desert that welcomes him to the heart of the Sahara.

It is impossible to judge how far he is from the ground. He does not suppose that the phenomenon extends to any great height, and having ascertained its nature, he prepares to re-ascend. But a sound catches his ears, a sound of tearing and rending, followed by harsh cries of terror, pain, and despair. Listening intently, he ascertains that the place from whence the sounds proceed is not stationary, for sometimes it is nearer to him than at others; but in no case many rods from him. While thus listening, and scarcely heeding his machine, he feels beneath him the touch as of soft yielding ground. The Ariel stops erect, and Criss, standing up in his car, calls aloud, in English,—

"Does anyone want help?"

He pauses and listens, but there is no reply. Again he cries, this time, remembering where he is, in Arabic,—

"If anyone wants help, let him speak."

An answer came, rapidly and eagerly; and apparently from one so close to him as to make him look quickly round. But nothing was visible through the mist of the mirage. The reply was in the pure Arabic spoken by the better classes in Soudan. Criss readily interpreted it.

"Say first who offers help. Of what nation?"

"English," replied Criss.

"English for certain, and no Bornouse?"

"An English and a true man, for certain," replied Criss; "a traveller on the way back to London from South Africa."

"You speak my language almost too well for me to trust you," was the response. "Say, how are you travelling?"

"Alone, and in my own car—an electro-magnetic flying machine. But what and wherefore do you fear?"

"I do not fear. You cannot be Bornouse, for they know not the use of such machines. I am a fugitive from the insurrec-

tion, and am injured; and there may be pursuers on my track."

There was plenty of light, and the speakers were close together, but they were still invisible to each other. Their voices sounded strange and hollow, through the dense and laden air. Criss learnt that the sufferer had fallen while endeavoring to cross the Sahara in an old-fashioned aëromotive, in the use of which he had but little skill. He had been badly wounded before, and now was still more crippled by his fall, and by the struggles of the machinery while expending its power.

Finding him still reluctant, and knowing the danger a desert-storm would have for his apparatus, Criss said,

"You must decide at once. Either allow me to serve you, or say farewell."

"I shall perish miserably if left here," was the answer, in a somewhat pettish tone.

"Can worse befal you through me, whoever I may be?" asked Criss.

"I will trust you," answered the voice; "but how are you to find me?"

"Leave that to me," said Criss; "but do not stir from where you are."

"Alas! I cannot move any more; for my machine is exhausted, and I too am fainting."

Had there been any holding ground, Criss would have secured the Ariel against the chances of any wind that might arise, and stepped out, holding a string to serve as clue by which to find it again. This being out of the question, he leaned over and drove a stake as far as he could into the yielding sand, fastened to it one end of a long cord, and then made the Ariel move slowly to the other end of it. During this process, the two men spoke at intervals, in order to ascertain their distance and direction from each other.

"You are going quite away from me," said the stranger, in a feeble and querulous tone, as Criss reached the end of his line.

"I shall soon be nearer," said Criss, delighted to find that

the length of his cord was sufficient to make so easily appreciable a difference in their distance. "I have got my centre and my distance now, and am about to describe a circle with them. Keep quiet, and directly the string catches you, let me know."

A few moments more, and the manœuvre was successful. The line caught against the crippled aëromotive, and Criss drawing it in, came close up to it. The two men could now see each other distinctly. The stranger was a fine-looking man, apparently of mixed race, between fifty and sixty years of age, and richly dressed.

"You do not look English," he remarked, after a keen scrutiny of Criss's face.

"I believe it is only in blood that I am not English," said Criss; "but now let me examine your wounds?"

"Not now, not now. I want to get further from danger. Can you carry me to a place of safety?"

"I can carry you, but not your baggage," said Criss; "but I assure you that you are too far out in the desert to be discovered. None could see us if they tried. My lighting upon you is so extraordinary a coincidence that it is not likely to be repeated. It is true, we might telegraph to them, but none can telegraph to us, for none know where we are."

And he insisted upon examining his wounds.

The stranger, who was evidently a man of distinction, and accustomed to exercise authority, could not repress an expression of amused surprise at the kindly imperious way in which this youth took command of him, and directed his movements.

"One leg broken," said Criss, "and one arm; a bad wound in the head, and several bruises on the body."

"Those are all from the fall," said the stranger. "Flying-machines are prohibited in Soudan. The people are too barbarous to be trusted with them. I alone possessed one, an old one, which I kept secretly against emergencies, but I have little skill in using it. Yet I think I should have got safely in it to the fortress of Asben, where I have friends, but for the wounds received in the insurrection, which prevented me from managing it aright. But look at my left side, just below the ribs—I feel a hurt there."

"A small bullet wound," said Criss, examining the part indicated; "but it has ceased to bleed. It is impossible for me to find Asben, or any other place in the desert, in this mist. Even were I to ascend to the clear sky and take an observation, I should inevitably lose the position on coming down again. Besides, in such times the loyalty even of your friends in Asben may be dubious. I propose, therefore, that you let me take you to Algiers. I have friends there, of whom one is a first-rate doctor. When you are well, I will take you to any place you choose."

The stranger assented; but on endeavoring to move into the Ariel, he nearly fainted with pain and weakness. Criss then administered a cordial. It was only with considerable difficulty that the change was at length effected.

"Is there anything here of small bulk that you wish to take?" asked Criss, pointing to the baggage.

"They contain little beside wine and provisions. I have enough about me to pay any moderate expenses for some little time to come."

And he looked wistfully at Criss, as if to divine his disposition respecting the laws of property.

"There, one or two of those little boxes may as well come with us," he said, carelessly indicating the packages in question. "They will not materially add to your burden, and it would be a pity to leave all my little knick-nacks to be buried in the sand."

They were ready to start, and Criss looked around him. So intent had they both been upon personal matters, that they had not observed the change that had taken place. Criss was startled at beholding the new aspect which nature had assumed in the last few minutes.

The mirage had entirely vanished, and from the somewhat elevated position on which the Ariel was resting,—the summit of a huge sandy roller,—happily for the present at rest until the wind should give it a fresh impetus on its ever westward course towards the Atlantic,—the vast desert lay spread around

them, an illimitable ocean of sand. The spectacle struck vividly upon Criss's unfamiliar eyes. There was a beauty in it which he had not suspected, but of a kind to make him shudder at its absolute desolateness.

"Surely, surely," he murmured as he gazed, "this is not what was meant by the promise that there should be no more sea! Fancy the whole earth thus!"

"Praying? and with your back to the East?" asked the stranger, who had not caught Criss's words.

When they were aloft and on their course, Criss told him his thought.

"You know and can quote our Bible, and yet say you are English? Why, I have always understood that the English were a nation of infidels, who had banished the Bible from their land."

"On the contrary," said Criss, "we consider no education complete that does not include a knowledge of it. Though it is true we do not regard it as a Fetich, to be adored but not comprehended. That we should call superstition."

"Superstition? Ah, yes, you English, I know, look upon my people as superstitious. We regard you as irreligious."

"Besides," added Criss, "I believe I have both Hebrew and Greek blood in me. So that I have a manifold right to know something of the literature of those languages."

"I knew there was something Eastern in you the moment I saw you," exclaimed the wounded man. "And I felt there was a link between us. I, too, have Hebrew blood in me. I am descended from—" And here he stopped, and appeared to be faint from pain and exhaustion.

"You came across Bornou," he asked, suddenly. "Did you hear what was going on at the capital?"

Criss told him that he only paused for a moment, to offer to take mails, and that they told him the Emperor had disappeared. The palace, too, was in flames."

"Oh, those cursed traitors," muttered the fugitive; "but I shall be avenged. In vain will they seek for that which they desire."

And his faintness came over him again.

After another dose of the cordial, he said,

"I am weaker even than I thought. When can we reach a city? And are you sure Algiers is the best place for me."

Criss told him that a few hours more would bring them there, and that it had been famous as a sanitarium ever since the old French occupation. He proposed, too, to place him in the hands of a doctor of whose skill he was well aware, and under the protection of the British Minister, who was a great personal friend of his own. Criss added also that he himself would have to proceed almost at once to England, when he had seen him properly cared for.

"You will leave me!" exclaimed the stranger. "Will anything induce you to remain? I can reward you—indeed!"

"It is impossible," said Criss; "but if necessary, I can return, and that soon."

"I dread the intrigues of my enemies, if they learn where I am. I have never been friendly with the Mediterranean States."

"Our minister is all powerful. Besides, he will do anything for me."

"You speak as if you were somebody, and had influence, and were not a mere courier."

"Every Englishman is Somebody, whether he be courier or not," replied Criss; "but I am not a courier." And he gave the stranger an outline of his history.

"What is your age?"

Criss told him he was going home to complete his majority.

"And your name?"

Criss told him.

"Can there be another of that name?"

"Certainly not," Criss said, and told him generally how he came to be so called.

He sank back, murmuring,

"Christmas Carol! twenty-one years! Christmas Carol! Wonderful are the ways of the Almighty!"

* * * * * * *

A little longer, and Criss, enlisting the sympathies of his friends, the Minister and the doctor, had fulfilled all his promises to his unfortunate passenger. He then went to take his leave. The fugitive made no further effort to detain him, but implored a promise that he would return to him if possible; and added—

"I know not whether I shall recover. My impression is that I shall not. If I do not, I adjure you to observe as a last injunction of the sacred dead, what I am about to say to you. You see this small packet. None but you must know of its contents. I will place your name upon it. If the rebellion in Soudan fails, present it to the Emperor. It will win for you whatever consideration is within his power to show. Yet it is not for reward, but as the sacredest duty, that you will do this. Should the rebellion succeed, and the Empire not be restored, the contents are—— But I will leave directions in writing."

Criss said he would fulfil the injunction to the letter; and the stranger declared himself content. There was that about the youth which inspired a confidence which no protestations could have produced. When he started for London the packet was already entrusted to the British Minister. The account given him of the patient by the doctor, determined him to lose no time in returning again to Algiers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE time was Christmas-eve; the place, Lord Avenil's private rooms in the Triangle. The following morning would see Criss of age, and in possession of his fortune. Avenil and Bertie differed as to the feelings with which their ward would receive the intelligence about to be broken to him. The event proved that they were both right, and both wrong. The old lawyer who had from the first been entrusted with the legal part of the business, was present; as also, of course, was Criss, but two days arrived from Algiers.

During dinner, Criss recounted his recent adventures, making the wreck and the rescue of Nannie, and the subsequent flight over the length of Africa the most prominent points.

After dinner they proceeded to business. The lawyer first read aloud a brief narrative of the finding of Criss in the balloon on the iceberg. He knew something of this before, but the reference to his probable parents and descent, possessed for him an interest that was ever fresh and vivid. He was much touched on learning that the proceeds of the valuables found in the balloon had been regarded as belonging to himself, the only surviving occupant, and so scrupulously husbanded for his benefit, that the finder, Bertie, had continued to work hard for his own living, accepting nothing out of Criss's fortune beyond what had actually been expended on him.

The particulars of the fortune itself formed the last item. One deduction, the lawyer remarked, might appear large, and doubtless it was so. This was for the item of taxation. But it was not large when they considered the advantage given in return for it, in the shape of perfect protection. The fiscal system of the country being based, as it had long been, exclusively upon realized property, in order to remove, as far as possible, all burdens from industry and earnings, fortunes such as that before them, bore the chief brunt of taxation. If their young friend had included among his studies the history of British Economics, he must know that nothing had tended so much towards the security of property, as the introduction of such a measure. For it reconciled the industrial classes, which form the great bulk of the community, to the accumulation by individuals of the gigantic fortunes for which modern times were distinguished. In the foremost ranks of such fortunate individuals he had the great pleasure of reckoning their ward and friend, Mr. Christmas Carol. "And for fear," he concluded, "you should think I have made a mistake, and said thousands when I ought to have said hundreds, and millions when I ought to have said thousands; here are the figures for you to read yourself. Here, also, in this casket, are some of the smaller jewels which belong to you, for it was not thought necessary or

advisable to dispose of the whole of them." And he placed the document in Criss's hands.

Even Bertie was startled at the total, for though aware of the original amount, he had not thought of the enormous addition which would be made by allowing it to accumulate at compound interest for nearly twenty-one years.

Criss took the document mechanically, but did not look at it.

His eyes were bent upon the ground, as if he were endeavoring by a process of intense cogitation to grasp the whole subject. At length he looked up, and said:

"I am very glad indeed to be so rich, and most grateful to you to whom I owe it all. Indeed, I look upon it as a debt, and not as a possession. It is yours far more than mine, and I hold it as a free gift, to be resumed at your pleasure, and spent as you approve. But I want to be your debtor for one kindness more. I want no one else to know of it. I feel that it is only by keeping it a profound secret that I can use this wealth as it can best be used. Let me pass through the world known simply as Criss Carol, with a tolerable independence, otherwise I feel that both my power and my satisfaction will be seriously imperilled."

The old lawyer was the first to speak. After looking towards Avenil and Bertie, and seeing that neither of them were ready, he said, with that bland smile which appears to have been an appanage of lawyers ever since, according to the old legend, the first one put his foot into Eden:

"I suspect that the difficulty of keeping your secret will not be on our part so much as on your own, my dear young sir. My own impression is that a young man might as well expect to walk about with Mount Vesuvius under his arm in a state of eruption, and expect people not to notice it, as to keep all this gold hidden from view."

"At any rate," remarked Bertie, "we will do our best to hold our tongues, until you release us; eh, Avenil?"

"Of course, if Criss soberly and seriously insists upon secrecy," replied Avenil. "But I suspect his is only the natural reluctance everyone has to being made the subject of scrutiny

and observation while in a position in which he does not yet feel himself at home. A little later I think and hope he will learn that the mere fact of a man being known to be in the possession of a great faculty or power for good, and therefore that great things are expected from him, is calculated to operate admirably as a stimulus. Now I, my dear boy, have ventured already to cherish plans for you. Your fortune constitutes an engine of enormous power, socially and politically, if you choose so to apply it. And that power is as vastly increased by its existence being generally known, as the power of capital is increased by credit. For credit is capital *plus* character. The very reputation of being a young millionaire, with good education, extensive knowledge of the world (at least of the outside of it), and aspirations towards a career of usefulness, would, if applied in channels of which I am cognizant, at once secure your election to the lower chamber of the legislature, with the highest place in the land within your reach."

"All this may come in time," said Criss, unable to avoid smiling at his guardian's inventory of his advantages. "But I think you will allow that I am yet full young to turn legislator."

"Not a bit too young to begin to learn that or any other business, if you mean to excel in it," interposed the lawyer.

"But do you not consider," continued Criss, "that the circumstances of my origin impose some obligation upon me?"

"Of what kind?" asked Avenil.

"I may have a father living, and in need of me. These mysterious jewels, too, do they impose no responsibility? It seems to me as not impossible that a sacred duty may reveal itself in connection with them. Your kind care has made it possible for me to redeem them and still be very rich. If I am really of the Holy Stock, and lawful inheritor of royal heirlooms, it is not difficult to imagine duties arising which cannot at present be foreseen."

This speech made Avenil and Bertie involuntarily look at each other, for it recalled my grandmother's remarks at the consultation of many years before.

Avenil was the first to answer him.

"My dear boy," he said, "I can quite understand and sympathize with your feelings under the circumstances. The sudden accession to an enormous power such as has come into your hands, is sure to suggest, to a man of conscience, the incurrence of corresponding responsibilities, and open a whole new region of possibilities, or rather, impossibilities. Such suggestions as your last seem to me very remote from the category of the practical."

"As for redeeming the crown diamonds of the Empire of Central Africa," said Bertie, "for such you know your jewels now are,—if you want to do that, the revolution will probably make it easy. But I doubt whether the Emperor would have consented to be bound by his agreement. The superstitious value he attached to their possession would have prevented that. He might, however, be willing to pay handsomely for the privilege of retaining them; that is, in the event of his remaining Emperor, and being able to do so."

"How would you spend this money?" said Criss, suddenly addressing Avenil.

"I? Oh, my dear boy, you know my foible. It has been the same ever since, as a child, I was caught putting a thermometer into the pepper and the mustard, to find out why they burnt my mouth. Experiment is the basis of Science, and Science has for its end the improvement of humanity. I have often held forth to you respecting that which I regard as the Science of Sciences."

"You mean the relations of capital, labor, and land?"

"Yes, in some measure; but you have never yet, I think, learned to see the subject as I do, from a religious point of view." He said this with a smile; for he knew that it was precisely because of what Criss deemed the lack of the religious element in his character that they had never been in complete accord.

"You see," he continued, "I prefer the active to the subjective or speculative form of the religious sentiment, and regard thinking and working as the chiefest of man's functions.

Indeed, for me, the term *work* in itself means the combination of wishing, willing, and acting. It was because you would have capital that I wanted you to have an estate. The mere laborer puts into his land the power only of a single pair of hands, and generally of an undeveloped brain. The capitalist works it with the accumulated powers of several generations of mind and body in combination. For capital is stored industry. As the coal beds, to which England owed its greatness until their approaching exhaustion led to the discovery of something more efficient, represented millions of years of stored sun-power, so capital represents the accumulated toil of ages. There is no longer the old antagonism between it and labor. Such antagonism was but the result of bad management, and was as absurd as an antagonism between the industry of the past and that of the present—which, indeed, it was. I don't quite coincide in the distinction our legal friend here drew just now between property actually realized, and property in process of realization. To tax capital is to tax wages, which are paid out of capital. I differ from him also as to the propriety of making the rich pay nearly all the expenses of government. Because a man is rich, is no reason why he should be robbed, or pay for the protection of his neighbors. But this is not our subject just now. You, my dear Christmas, have in your hands such stored industry as I have described, to an extent absolutely unprecedented for one of your years. If you expend a million a year, and let the rest accumulate for another twenty years, as it has already done, your fortune will exceed the National Debt, whose magnitude so alarmed our ancestors previously to the Emancipation. But it is a small matter that there be money in the world. What does matter, is the hand that holds it. You have the money, and the disposition to use it well. My fear is only, that in trying to use it too well; that is, in aiming at the impracticably high and absolute, you will fail altogether. Aiming at the ideal, you will lose the real. The physical good of man must be the basis of the moral. The grand mistake of the ancient world lay in its commencing at the wrong end. It inverted the Pyramid. Placing religion first, they proceeded

from it to morals, and thence to physics. That is, they built on that of which they knew the least. From the unknown and unknowable, they inferred the knowable. It was because their religion, while claiming to be the basis of morals, consisted in assumptions, that it failed to regenerate the world. We moderns, on the contrary, starting from the physical and verifiable, make morals the basis of religion. We cannot, as did our forefathers, even imagine a religion divorced from, or antagonistic to morality. We hold it as impossible for the Divine Will to be in conflict with the moral law, as with the physical. For us, Religion signifies the relation of the part to the whole, as Morality is the relation of part to part. We must learn the smaller and nearer lesson first. From our duty to the finite springs the idea of our duty to the Infinite. If we care not for that which is within our reach, we are not likely to care for that which lies beyond. The love of the seen must precede and produce the love of the unseen. Mysticism is not necessarily insanity.

"You deem me deficient in religious sentiment," he continued, in a tone verging on solemnity. "Know, then, that for me, the surface of this earth is as the floor of heaven, and that my ideal of life is to tread it, as the angels of whom you are wont to dream, with firm confidence in its capacity to sustain the higher life of all best aspirations; and that the only proof of faith is work. It is by work alone that wishing and willing transmute themselves into deeds. We are products of the earth. To improve the soil, is to go a long way towards improving the produce. This is the function of Capital; that is, of work. You have only to find an occupation worthy of yourself and your means; and your floating ideas, now vague and undefined, will gradually arrange themselves harmoniously and musically around it.

"One word more. Do not think I wish you to go out of your way to compass some formal eccentric destiny. My meaning is, that you should rather let your future spring out of elements which come naturally in your way. Many a man courts failure, and wins it, by rushing into a position for which he has no natural call or aptitude."

Rarely in his intercourse with Criss had Avenil indicated so decided an appreciation of the spiritual side of things. His present tone excited a lively feeling of satisfaction in the youth's breast, and he felt as if he had scarcely done justice before to the character of his guardian's mind, and the school of which he was so distinguished a member. Criss was accustomed to hear students of science characterized by his friends among the Remnant as irreligious and atheistic. He was glad to have such evidence that the epithets were unmeaning or undeserved.

Bertie then alluded to the event of the morrow, and invited the whole party to spend the day at his cottage on the Surrey Downs. Criss expressed his readiness, and added that he must immediately afterwards run over to Algiers, to see the wounded man he had picked up in the desert.

"You certainly seem born for the rescue of folks in trouble," remarked Avenil. "I suppose some mishap is constantly occurring to somebody, and as you are always on the move, you naturally light upon the victims. By the way, I see that this evening's papers give an account of the deposition and flight of the Emperor of Soudan, and mention that he is supposed to have perished in the desert while endeavoring to reach Mourzouk or Darfur, and that he must have taken the crown jewels with him. That hideous Sahara!" he added, "it is even a greater nuisance to our hemisphere than the desert interior of Australia is to that southern world. But for Africa, I suspect that Europe would have been far more habitable than it is."

"That is exactly what occurred to me at the time," said Criss. "And I thought it such a pity that all the abundant rivers which belong to it, should carry their waters right away from its centre, instead of flowing through it."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entry of a servant, who stated that an aërial parcel-express carrier had brought a package for Mr. Carol to be delivered to himself only, and for which he must have his receipt.

Carol left the room, and returning a few moments afterwards with a small box and an open letter in his hands, he told his friends that he had just learnt the death of the man he had left in Algiers. The letter he had read was from the minister, who wrote that he would find within the box a communication in Arabic, which the dying man wrote himself, and which, with the other contents of the box, he had assured him was of the utmost importance.

"Is there any pledge of secrecy?" asked Avenil.

"None, now that the poor man is dead," said Criss, "and I shall be only too glad to let you have as much information as I myself possess."

And opening the dead man's letter, he set himself to give its purport in English. Before he had translated the first sentence, his hand dropped, and he exclaimed,—

"It was the Emperor himself!"

"What!" cried Avenil, Bertie, and the lawyer together; "the fugitive whom you rescued, the man who has sent you that packet? Open it, open it at once! It was he who bought your jewels!"

"See for yourselves," said Criss, "while I read this letter."

With eager hands—for, grave men though they were, the singularity of the coincidence was enough to disturb their gravity—they opened the box. More eagerly yet they opened the casket which it contained, a golden one, with a diadem in a monogram on the outside. They then removed some layers of cotton; when, in superb and serene beauty, like the sun surrounded by his planets, a magnificent diamond was revealed, with a number of smaller ones attached to it in an oval setting. Then Avenil read the inscription, which was in Arabic, and ran thus:—

"The Talisman of Solomon, and crown jewels of Theodorus, Emperor of Soudan."

A second compartment contained a number of other jewels of remarkable size and beauty; and beneath this, at the bottom of the casket, was the duplicate of the bill of sale and covenant to restore them to the agents or representatives of Christmas

Carol, at the same price at which they had been bought, should the demand be made within one year of the said Christmas Carol attaining the age of twenty-one.

"Here are more millions for you," said Avenil, handing him the casket. "But pray what says his unhappy Majesty in his letter? Did he know that you were the Christmas Carol named here, and does he make you a present of them?"

"You shall hear it," returned Criss, and he read thus, translating as he went on:

"Theodorus, Emperor of Abyssinia and Soudan, now dying at Algiers of wounds received from dastard rebels and traitors, to the young Englishman, Israelite, and Greek, Christmas Carol.

"But for the aid of thy hand, my bones would now be whitening the Sahara. But for the true spirit in thine eyes, my jewels, the sacred Talisman of Solomon, the cherished ornaments of my crown, and ancient heir-looms of my family, would now be lying beneath the sands of the desert, hidden for ever from the eye of man. So many dangers and chances have they survived since the day when they gleamed upon the diadem of my ancestor Solomon, that it is no impiety to suppose that the Divine Framer of Destiny reserves them for further glories. But it is not vouchsafed to me to know what the future will bring forth.

"How they first came into your hands I know not; perchance you received them from him by whom many years ago they were sacrilegiously rapt away from the kingdom, even from my Uncle, to whom as Regent in my minority their guardianship was entrusted. Exiled from the country, he roamed the world, and then settled in Damascus, where he dwelt long. But when I sought him there, he had mysteriously disappeared. He was of the elder branch, but illegitimate. Mine alone is the line of the rightful sovereign.

"I leave a Son, sole heir to my throne and crown. Should he become Emperor, these gems would be his, save for the right which you possess of re-purchasing them. I need not say

'Deal kindly by him, as you have dealt by his father!' for you will do so. And to you doing so, and asking what you will, he will grant the half of his kingdom, even to the turning of the Sahara into a smiling garden, as one of our proverbs hath it.

"Should he not come into his imperial rights, you may serve him better than by restoring to him the gems. Who knows but that in serving him you will be serving your own blood. Your lineaments, as well as your connection with these jewels, indicate you as not far removed from our royal race. But of this I know nought. Wonderful are the ways of the Almighty. Peace be with you. Farewell."

CHAPTER VII.

THE conversation at Bertie's next day turned much upon Criss's recent adventures. His guardians were chiefly struck by his apparent indifference to the wealth of which he found himself possessed, and his pre-occupation by the idea of responsibility imposed upon him by his position. It was as if he had lost his independence, instead of gaining it, by being so rich. He was much affected, too, by the strangeness and nature of the coincidence that thus, on the eve of his birthday, revealed a clue to the mystery of his birth.

"You will take an interest now," remarked Avenil to him, "in watching the telegrams to learn the progress of political events in Central Africa. Should the Emperor's son succeed in recovering the throne, he will be ready to accord a warm welcome to the rescuer of his father, the restorer of his crown jewels, and a possible blood-relation. But you must not let him detain you from us as a new-found friend from whom he cannot part."

"You think there are parts of the world where capital can be more usefully employed than in Central Africa?" remarked

Criss, with an arch smile, the meaning of which Avenil was at no loss to interpret and appropriate.

"Employ it," he said, "upon Races whose capacity for a high civilization renders them worthy of preservation. It is not in tropical Africa that such can subsist."

"I suspect you are more than half of the opinion I found expressed somewhere, that the tropics are a mistake altogether," returned Criss; "and would have preferred that the land of the earth, instead of running north and south, had been placed east and west, in broad belts, and confined to the temperate zone, with the sea occupying all the polar and equatorial spaces."

"It is possible that it was so once," replied Avenil. The present configuration of the continents indicates the action of strong currents setting continuously in one direction, parallel and not transversely to their coasts, just as would occur were the earth to revolve from north to south instead of from west to east—"

"Come, come!" exclaimed Bertie, "we won't waste to-day upon serious talk. Here are a number of guests to whom you must pay attention, some of them your old school-fellows, Criss; and all your tribe, Avenil."

It was a happy evening, for Criss was much beloved, and all rejoiced in his accession to man's estate and a position of affluence; though of the extent of the latter none but his guardians had any conception. Together with the respect and affection which Criss inspired, there was mingled a certain sentiment of curiosity and wonderment. All with whom he came into contact felt that he was not completely of them or their kind, but had a life apart, and into which they could not enter. He was to them as a stranger, who arrives and takes up his abode in a new country, having spent his previous life amid scenes and associations altogether unknown to his new neighbors. Of these he learns the outward ways, and adopts the outward speech and garb and manners; but they all the time feel that his mind is filled with memories altogether foreign to his present surround-

ings, and to which they have no clue. However much they may admire and believe in him, they yet never feel that he sympathizes entirely with them. If that which they see of his character does not inspire them with respect for its quality or power, their very ignorance of him in the past produces mistrust of him for the future. If their estimate be favorable, the sense of mystery about him serves to engender a certain amount of awe. Suggesting the unknown, he suggests also the infinite. Respecting one, whose life and conversation was known to be so much in the unfamiliar heavens as Criss's, curiosity ran strong to see how he would fulfil his part on earth. He was evidently not of the brood of the commonplace, who so readily become *au fait* of the small technicalities of life. The light that shone from him had its source within, and it rested not on the trivial. The best painters of the time despaired of rendering the translucent envelope of his body through which his luminous soul shone forth.

Avenil's dominant feeling respecting such a temperament was one of apprehension. One of his reasons for urging Criss to practical work, was founded in his alarm lest the very sensitiveness of his organization should work its own ruin. Steady occupation he held to be the best cure for a tendency to the *over-soul*. He hailed the recent incidents in Criss's career, chiefly for the effect they might have in drawing him to the practical. For the same reason he would have hailed his marriage, even with an inferior nature. In his eyes Criss was made of the stuff that has afforded martyrs to the cross and the stake; that is, the stuff of which enthusiasts for an idea are made; and to Avenil such enthusiasm was the offspring of a taint of insanity.

The party at Ariel Cottage included the Bishop of the diocese, who, as chief inspector of the National Schools of the district, had long known Criss, and knowing him, had always loved him. Another also of Criss's ecclesiastical friends, the Dean of St. Paul's, was present. His festival in the Metropolitan Cathedral had taken place in the morning, and Criss

had attended it. For he was strongly attached to St. Paul's, which standing in the dense and busy heart of the great city, was in its finished perfection, for him as for all enthusiastic citizens, a monument of the final overthrow of the sectarian spirit in these isles, and of the triumph of the sentiment of citizenship and humanity over that of church and creed. It was to Criss alone of aërialists that the Dean had given permission to alight and rest on the summit of his church.

In the evening the whole party adjourned to the Cathedral on the Downs, a noble edifice belonging to the period of the Emancipation. It was mainly built and endowed from the proceeds of the sale of a number of churches and chapels belonging to the various sects into which the population of the district had once been divided. These, sharing the general enthusiasm of the nation on shaking off the yoke of mediævalism, at finding that the widest cultivation of their intellectual and affectional faculties, was not incompatible with the exercise of the religious sentiment, and that the religious sentiment itself is a living, and not an historical affection,—brought the property which they possessed as separate and hostile sects, and cast it into the lap of the Establishment, to be expended in converting that ancient organization into a National institution for promoting the general welfare, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, of the entire nation.

Brought up, as I was, in the narrow sectarianism of the orthodox "*Remnant*," and only recently made a partaker of the Emancipation, I can better than most of my readers, appreciate the blessedness of the change which our country then underwent. Accustomed as most of us are to it, we have need to be careful students of history to realize the difference between England torn and rent by theological and ecclesiastical divisions, and England in the enjoyment of unanimity of sentiment, even where opinions differ. What a contrast there is between the feelings with which I contemplate the harsh exclusiveness wherein my own youth was instructed to restrict and confine itself to the narrowest and most revolting conceptions of the Universe, and the sentiments evoked by this broad, genial,

capacious edifice about which are entwined the hearts of all the surrounding dwellers, from their earliest youth to their latest age.

The Bishop himself,—I have since made his acquaintance, and learnt to regret his death,—came in for his full share of the warm feelings which clustered around his cathedral. He fulfilled the ideal of a Bishop of the period, whose functions comprised the feeding of the lambs of his flock as well as the tending of the sheep. The steadiness with which he maintained the rational character of the teaching given, both in the schools and the churches of his diocese, won the highest confidence of all parents. Holding fast to the doctrine, that it is the function of education to make boys and girls into good and capable men and women, and at the same time to develop their respective individualities; his administration has been notable for its success in producing valuable citizens. An illustration of his width of spirit is to be found in his choice of a motto when one of his parishioners desired to add an inscription as a decoration to the Cathedral :—"All *sects* abandon, ye who enter here."

In no spirit of perfunctionary routine, but thoroughly *con amore,* did the good Bishop perform what he undertook. The ancient festival of Chistmas was one in which he had special delight. Taking as a model the old-fashioned Oratorio which we derive from our ancestors of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, he loved to found on it some musical service, which while representing objectively the season of the year, yet possessed an esoteric significance for those who were capable of perceiving it. But what that significance should be, he dictated to none. It was for Science to ascertain and fix phenomena. It was for Art to represent them; and for Nature and the individual soul to settle their interpretation between them. Thus only, he held, could God speak freely to man. These services were sung by an admirable choir, which he had selected from among all ages and classes, of both sexes, in the

neighborhood. And most enthusiastically did they enter into the spirit of their task, and flock to the Cathedral on the occasions in question.

It was a model Christmas-day for the climate. The snow had fallen at intervals, and a thin layer now covered the ground. When, towards nine o'clock, the party started from Bertie's for the cathedral, the wind had fallen, the sky was clear, and the stars shone out their brightest. As they passed by villa and garden, the trees and shrubs crackled and glistened in the frost. The bells rang out a joyous peal. The whole district was on the alert. Everybody was going to the Oratorio. It was known that the Bishop had requested the choir to observe strict secrecy respecting the piece to be performed. This added to the interest.

The service of the evening was prefaced by the Bishop with a brief address, rather colloquial than formal; and there were not wanting those among Bertie's party who fancied that it possessed a greater capacity than usual for personal application. During its delivery the vast building was wrapped in gloom, the only light visible being that which directed its rays on the pulpit.

After a few hearty words of welcome, the Bishop said he should revert to the old ecclesiastical custom of taking a sentence from the ancient sacred book of Christendom, as the key-note of his remarks. That sentence was, "These Three are One;" a sentence which, though well known to be ungenuine, was not, therefore, necessarily untrue. The object of all right reverence, he said, is a compound object, of which each constituent is distinct and complete in itself, and yet incapable of being detached from the others. Nations, as well as individuals, in seeking to effect such detachment, had invariably degraded their religion to a kind of polytheism, and the degeneration of their faith had involved that of themselves. The Greeks worshipped Beauty, finding their ideal in physical humanity. The Jews aimed at goodness or obedience to God, but ignoring a

human criterion imagined a deity independent of a moral law. We ourselves, again, were too liable to give the supremacy to the Useful. But the Holy Trinity of the excellencies could not thus be divided. There is no Beauty without Use; no Use without Goodness; no Goodness without Beauty. Each individual present probably felt drawn more towards some one of these sacred elements than towards the others. The most fortunate were those for whom all three possessed an equal attraction. The greatest advance man had ever made was when he erected his instinctive love of Beauty, Goodness, and Use, into a religion, and resolved to accord his best reverence to One whom he deemed to excel all others in the possession of them. Man's instinct had then proved too strong for the priesthoods; and in order to retain their influence, these had to give up their deities, which were but caricatures of humanity, and adopt the ideal recognized and insisted upon by men. The transatlantic poet-sage struck a true key-note when he said,—

"An honest God's the noblest work of man."

It was true that the ideal had not always since been maintained. It had oft been by the nations crucified, and buried, and relegated to the lowermost parts of the earth; but like the sun, whose rising from the depths of winter and darkness, they were now met to celebrate, it had been impossible to keep it down. The greatest relapse had been when men, fancying that truth was a thing to be kept hermetically sealed as in a bottle, instead of requiring free light and air to keep it sweet and wholesome, mistook *Churchianity* for Christianity, and made religion once more a set of opinions and a profession for a Caste.

It must ever be so when we submit the sentiments, whose essence is spontaneousness and flexibility, to be devitalized and crystalized by professional formalists. Now that we have finally got rid of these, we find an infinitely freer and fuller recognition of all that was good and true in the old systems, inasmuch as we accept it for its own sake. "For ourselves," the Bishop concluded, "let us strive to be Greeks, in our love of that which

is beautiful; Hebrews, in our allegiance to divine goodness; and Englishmen, in our devotion to that which is Useful and True. And if, perchance, any of us here present be conscious of possessing exceptional powers and advantages, let us not waste ourselves and them in the search for exceptional opportunities whereon to employ them. As, in the domain of knowledge, the fact that lies nearest to us, the fact of our own existence, must ever be the starting-point for all excursions towards truths which are more remote; so, in the domain of action, the duties which lie immediately around us, and spring out of our circumstances and nature, are those to which we should first devote ourselves, trusting to Providence to find others, should such be desirable. History shows that it was only when England abandoned her useless attempts to convert savages to her own commercial and theological beliefs, and directed her whole undivided energies to the improvement of her own social and mental condition, that she became the true missionary—the missionary who can point to the happy effects of his principles in his own case as an argument for their propagation."

The Cantata to be sung on that occasion was a hymn of the year, the words of which were the work of a well-esteemed young member of that congregation, who first saw the light on that day twenty-one years ago.

"You will, I am sure," added the Bishop, "join me in the wish that, as is his verse, so may his and our lives be: a Christmas Carol and a song of praise, and a standard of Beauty, Goodness, and Usefulness. And may we succeed in so closely assimilating our real to our ideal, that the subjective shall become for us the objective, and faithfully reflect within us the universe that lies without us. Far be it from me to dictate to any; but for myself, I may say that the ever-recurring phenomena of the system of which we are a part, are in a striking correspondence with the phenomena of my own heart. Like the sun, whose renascence, as I have said, we this day celebrate, the ideal towards which I would fain strive, though always suffering and dying within me, is also always rising and ascending: oft obscured by the clouds and mists of doubt and diffi-

culty, and oft again shining out with a brightness and a warmth that draws me up perforce towards it."

Criss's amazement at the Bishop's announcement was supreme. He turned for an explanation to Bertie, who sat by him.

"My dear boy," he said, "I have to ask your pardon. I found the verses some time ago, and showed them to the Bishop. He begged them of me. I did not know he would use them in this way. Considering his eagerness, and his regard for you, I am inclined to praise him for the very delicate way in which he brought in your name. Only your own friends would detect the allusion."

"I do not mind that," said Criss; "but I had forgotten all about the piece. It was a mere boyish production, and far from finished; and if I remember right, I never felt quite sure that some of the lines were altogether new, though I never succeeded in tracing them."

As he spoke there came welling through the darkness from the choir, at the far end of the chancel, in a low, wailing recitative, this lament for the departure of summer and approach of winter:

Earth wrapped in gloom
No light, no heat,
No fruits, no flowers;
But storm and snow
In all our bowers.
The Lord of life sinks low
Toward the tomb.

The effect of this was weird in the extreme. A perceptible shiver ran through the whole vast congregation. Then a rich contralto voice was heard singing the plaintive verses beginning,—

Where is our laughter fled?

to which a tenor responded in strains exciting to hope,—

Yon moon derives her light from him;
Perchance 'tis we are turned away:
Perchance he visits other lands,
And, timely, hither back will stray,

With rays nor cold nor dim.
No need to think our Lord is dead,
Because sleep's pillow claims his head.

But to the eye of sense there is as yet no ground for hope. Despair still strives for utterance, and finds it at the mouth of the bass, who now breaks forth into the expression of doubt, beginning,—

Declined so low,
Mid storm and snow,
Wilt ever rise again?

A sentiment in which the chorus seems to participate, for it now indulges in the soft minor air, beginning with—

When the lamp of life burns low;

and suddenly changing into the major with the bold aria,—

The wintry dragon claims his prey.

The sun now pausing in his downward career, the watchers are speechless with anxiety. Is the king of day still able, in this his hour of weakness, to contend successfully with the baleful powers of darkness? During this period of doubt, the music alone is heard, in low and fitful strains of alternate hope and fear. When the last moment of the Solstice arrives, the music is hushed, and the intense stillness broken by a soprano voice singing the lovely air,—

Weak in the cradle of the year.

Then suddenly the whole strength of the chorus joins in singing the bravura—

Baffled winter hie thee hence.

At this juncture the cathedral grows lighter, in correspondence with the period represented; and the music changes its character so as to indicate the sun's growth in height and strength, as the days increase in length, until the arrival of the spring equinox. Then once again comes in an interval of

doubt. Will he maintain the ground gained from the powers of darkness, or recede once more towards the horizon? This fear is expressed in the song:—

Balanced the scales of day and night.

But the sun still goes on his upward way, and so the entire chorus and orchestra, together with the grand organ, break forth into pæans of tumultuous joy, as the king of heaven ascends triumphant into the sky, revealing the kingdom of heaven, or summer, and showering down gifts on men, in food and raiment, mirth and love and marriage-blessing; and the whole concludes with the Jubilate,—

Great God of Nature, Hail!
By Thee sustained we live.
Not once hast Thou appeared for all,
And left us then
To fail and fall:
But year by year Thy presence shows,
In winter's snows,
In summer's sun,
In life and death,
In joy and grief,
That thou, and we, and all, are one:
We the parts and Thou the Whole,
We the body, Thou the soul:
That Thou art All, and else is none!

Talking with the Bishop afterwards, Criss said that if he were to re-write it now, he would say a good word for winter; for that even cold and darkness have their uses, and were not unmixed evils, if evils at all.

"Then you would have just spoilt it for our purpose," replied the Bishop, with a smile. "A devil of some sort is a dramatic necessity."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The insurrection in Soudan, and the flight of the Emperor, caused great consternation in Palestine. The millionaires of Jerusalem had largely invested their wealth in loans to the Government, and mortgages on the rich cotton, sugar, shea-butter, ivory, and spice estates of Central Africa. It was their money that constructed that vast work, the Red Sea and Central African Plateau Railway, by which a main share of the products of the continent were brought to their markets. The greater portion of the National Debt of the country was owing to them; and, in fact, the Empire of Soudan was in a great degree their own creation. Cut off by the sandy ocean of the Sahara from contact with the mature civilizations of the North, and accessible only by Abyssinia and the Red Sea, the population which had been combined into a nation and converted from Islamism to Christianity, under the vigorous dynasty to which Theodorus belonged, were still in too rudimentary a stage to be able to make a change in their form of government without imminent danger to their general stability as a nation. Their conversion to Christianity from Islamism, while facilitating their intercourse with the Jews, had still left them a superstitious people. But one of the forms taken by their superstition—to which allusion has already been made, namely their veneration for the descendants of Solomon, and inheritors of his talismanic gems—tended to stimulate confidence in the

minds of capitalists as exercising a conservative influence. They might not be altogether favorable to the Jews themselves as such or to those sections of Christendom which traced their religious descent to the stock of David; but it was considered impossible that they should revolt against the heirs of the blood and crown of Solomon. So, when the thoroughness and extent of the revolution was demonstrated by the appearance of the Emperor's son as a fugitive in Jerusalem, immediately after the arrival of the intelligence of his father's deposition and flight, the capitalists of Palestine saw nothing but repudiation, confiscation, and loss staring them in the face. There were, moreover, most alarming rumors respecting the situation of the white settlers in Soudan, the insurgents being believed to be hostile to the presence of independent foreign communities in their country.

It is by virtue of their wealth, and not of their courage or armaments, that the Jews of Palestine have maintained the sway which has rendered their recent history so remarkable. Whatever the project resolved upon, they have but to find the money, and there are plenty of others to find the method and the means of execution. Thus, without a soldier or sailor of their own, they avenge themselves by contract upon peoples who, being as yet too barbarous to acknowledge the solidarity of nations, and join the confederated civilizations of the world, venture to outrage their interests or their honor.

It does not come within the functions of the Grand Council of European States to interfere in disputes between one of its own members and a nation lying outside it. But, as between its own members, it holds, happily, far too high a sense of its duties to allow even the mighty Jewish influence to interfere with its strict impartiality. It is only when a clear case of wilful and outrageous wrong is made out, that it allows the resort to force, and the employment of the military forces of the Confederacy.

The moral sense of the rest of the world is thus an effective counterpoise to the tendency manifested by the capitalists of Palestine to make interest dominate over right. For a member

of the Confederacy to make war upon a fellow-member without such permission, rightly entails a forfeiture of the protection of the Confederacy; and lays the offending member open to retribution, as an individual who, in a civilized country, takes the law into his own hands.

At the time of which I am writing, it was fortunate for at least one of the peoples neighboring to the Jews, that they were both under the jurisdiction of the Confederacy. For it needed such restraint to keep the ancient enmity of the Jews to the Egyptians, from breaking out into fierce expression and violence. The Empire of Central Africa lay outside, and was equally hostile to Egypt; but its alliance with Palestine made it too strong to be molested by that country; while on its own part it was restrained by a wholesome dread of the Confederacy, from wantonly attacking one of its members.

Its peculiar geographical position, too, made it practically inaccessible, either by sea or land. Had it been a republic instead of a monarchy, it could have defied attack from all quarters whatsoever. But its political system was not adapted to the present state of the world. The advance of science has rendered the person of a sovereign too easily assailable for a monarchical regime to enjoy the same security as that of a republic.

When the public credit of a country depends upon the stability of its institutions, and those institutions are summed up in and represented by a single individual, it is clear that the invention of flying vessels, which can at any moment swoop down with an armed squadron upon any spot of the earth, and carry off any individual, be he private citizen or emperor, must deprive the system of personal government of any element of permanence.

Even under the ancient "constitutional monarchies," the liability of the sovereign to seizure by death, rendered it necessary to postulate for him a fictional immortality, as was exemplified in the saying, "the king never dies." But liability to seizure by balloon is another matter. With their sovereign rapt away by an aërial force, and his whereabouts

beyond their ken, it would be impossible for a people to determine whether the throne were vacant or not.

It is true that, to some extent, the evil provides its own remedy; for it is possible to employ an aërial guard to ward off or avenge aërial outrage. But experience has too fully manifested the danger of entrusting such a product of advanced science to a people civilized enough only to abuse the power it confers on them. Life in Central Africa was intolerable, until the Jews insisted on the dependent Empire prohibiting the practice of aërialism within its limits; and the Emperor faithfully and stringently carried out the injunction, forbidding even the white settlers to have recourse to it. The only exception was made in favor of transient post-couriers, who, as they could not be prevented from passing over the land, were permitted to call for mails. The bulk of the population resented the restriction, and it served to inflame the dislike they already bore to the Jews, for the hard terms of the money bargains they had made with them.

The long-smouldering dissatisfaction was brought to a crisis when the Emperor resolutely vetoed an act passed by his legislature for repudiating the public debt conditionally on the Jews refusing to lower the interest by one-half. The Emperor, though sympathizing with his people, dared not do otherwise; for not only was he a man of high integrity, and sagacity enough to know the ultimate costliness of a policy of repudiation; but the known unflinching firmness of the Jews in avenging an injury to their interests, involved severe and inevitable punishment. There were not wanting rumors of swift and secret vengeance inflicted by their aëriel agents on their recalcitrant debtors. On this occasion, when it was found, on assaulting the royal palace in Bornou, that both the Emperor and the crown jewels had disappeared, the Jews were credited with having a hand in the work. It was not the first time that the jewels had disappeared, as we know by their being found in the balloon which descended on the iceberg at the birth of Christmas Carol. The unhappy Emperor himself has told us how that disappearance was effected. But even he was ignorant

of the circumstances attending their descent into the volcano of Kilauea.

CHAPTER II.

Once again far away from the earth's teeming surface, and aloft in the familiar regions of the upper air. Not this time bent on some enterprise of science, enjoyment, or humanity; not to seek intercourse with the sublimated occupants of the spiritual world; but solely to hold commune with his own inmost self, apart from all disturbing influences of circumstance and man, did Christmas Carol, possessor of manly youth, beauty, courage, skill, strength, knowledge, millions, and a soul, soar aloft to find in meditative abstraction the duty imposed upon him by his newly revealed endowments.

As he floated swiftly upon the eddying currents of that mid-winter season, unheeding whither they bore him—so absorbed was he by his own thoughts—he found those thoughts taking shape and varying as never had they done before. Thus, at one moment he found himself assailed by visions of all sensuous delight, in which every ideal of excellence in nature and art seemed to be subordinated to the lower self, impelling him, in an access of voluptuousness, to cry, "Oh, Pleasure, I worship thee," and to regard the world as a victim to be lawfully offered at the shrine of his own self-gratification.

Wondering whence these thoughts, so unfamiliar to him, proceeded, he chanced to glance at the magnetic register of his course, and found that he was poised over the historic land of all sensuous life; that land whose rulers had ever held that their country must be great, no matter at what expense of its neighbors; whose people had ever held that it was the function of all their rich endowments of wit and knowledge to minister to man's lower and animal nature; that land in which the moral sense and pure intelligence had never raised their

heads to protest against the national selfishness, but to lower them speedily in agony and blood—the land of France!

Criss had learnt from his angel friends that there is a mysterious link between the sympathies of the upper and lower worlds; and the discovery of his position showed him that he must now be under the influence of the class of ideas which have their root in the Gallic soil and temperament, and enter perchance into the composition of the heavens above them, and tinge the souls of its spiritual occupants.

Impatiently rejecting the suggestions thus infused into his mind, Criss urged his car onwards, once more giving rein to his spontaneous thoughts. Finding a more robust sentiment animating him, and his patriotic emotions taking the place of all others, he glanced downwards, and found by the white gleam of the snowy mountain ridges beneath him, that he was passing over the land once of Tell, and now the gymnasium of nations.

Presently his reverie took a religious character, wherein he found himself plied with impulses to devote himself wholly to the cultivation of all that is beautiful in art and poetic in sentiment, in conjunction with the symbolism of the ancient faiths, and so to build up a universal temple, into which, constrained by its beauty of rite and mystery of doctrine, all men should hasten to enter.

"Absorbed in me, Self will disappear," said the voice that now addressed him, "and with self will go the lower loves,—the love of country and of knowledge, the love of woman and of offspring, and the MAN will appear in all his unimpeded might, and the world acknowledge a new Cæsar and Pontiff of religion and art."

Glancing once more at his index he perceived that he had drifted across the Alps, and was being assailed by the spirit of Italy; that spirit of insatiable dominion, which seeks ever to subordinate mankind to one overpowering regime, to the utter destruction of the individuality and higher development of man.

"And even," mused Criss, "were I to choose such a career,

and become exalted over all others, even to being regarded as a divine founder or regenerator of such a system, unless mankind were the gainer thereby, it would be as nought and worse than nought; for though I win all to myself by virtue of the powers vested in me, nothing can convert the loss of others into my gain. Man I am and will be, and with man I must suffer or rejoice. 'Consecrate my talents to God?' Even that may be but another name for pride and self-seeking.

"So farewell, oh Rome! who in time long past forced upon man *Law*, and made him pay dearly for it—even his all here; and in time later forced upon him *Dogma*, and made him pay for it yet more dearly—even his all here and hereafter—pay with body and soul in time and eternity. Well indeed, doth the Laocoon, noblest of thy relic-marbles, represent Humanity struggling in thy once fatal toils!"

And now the blue mists of the Mediterranean and its border lands of sunshine began to disappear, as the moist south-west currents coming up from the restless Atlantic bore him towards the home of the north-east trade wind; and his soul, still kept open to receive whatever influences might pour into it from the surrounding world of spirit, found a new vision growing before it. This was a vision of times when men no longer suffered themselves to be ruled through the lower or more sensuous part of themselves, or suffered interest or love to dim their sense of justice and truth.

For now Criss's car had drifted over the great Teuton fatherland, where the air was inter-penetrated with pure and keen intellect, ever on the alert to know what was true, and holding nought as divine—contain what it might of beauty, use, or even of goodness—unless it put Truth first, and made all else subordinate to it.

This was so consonant to the ordinary tone of Criss's mind, that he was surprised at the elation he felt on coming into contact with this new sphere. But he presently learnt to ascribe it to the contrast which these fresh influences made with those of France and Italy, which had so recently affected him. Not

that he despised physical pleasure. He had too much happy animal health in him for that. Or failed to appreciate intensely all beauty in sentiment and art. He had too much soul for that. But the spiritual airs which emanated from Germany, found a perfect response in his intellect, inasmuch as they encouraged him not only to place Truth first, but to reject as intrinsically hideous and pernicious whatever in life, in art, or in religion was not established upon a basis of pure science, at once verifiable and harmonious with itself. "Here," said Criss, "I strike the key-note of the modern civilizations."

And now, as in search of the fast-sinking wintry sun, he rose higher and higher, and was carried by the winds that came from the Steppes of Tartary once more over his own English home, influences of various kinds from far and wide, but already harmoniously blended together, seemed to gather round him. Viewed through their medium, the land of his adoption appeared to him as a vast digestive apparatus, receiving and assimilating all things that were cast into it, and by virtue of its sound constitution, converting all into good living substance. At the basis of the system of thought now presented to him, Criss found the clue to the character and history of England—the courage to be free and to use her freedom, a courage founded upon faith in the divine harmony of the universe, and respect for the rights of every individual soul.

Contrasting the dominant idea of the Church of the Emancipation with that of the old mediæval sacerdotalism, he saw clearly that England owed all her success in extricating herself from the terrible dilemmas of the past, dilemmas social, political, and religious, to her sense of equal justice alike to persons and to periods. As no individual, however great and high, was suffered to dominate the rest; so no age, however great its achievements, or sacred its traditions, was suffered to rule another age. England had gained much in advance on her past, before she could convert her National Church into an universal fane, beneath whose dome every mind developed by culture, could find free expression for its own perceptions of truth, and opportunity of submitting them to the general judgment.

Catching sight, as he glanced downwards, of the great city lying far below, and descrying in the midst of its blaze of lights the dim outline of its cathedral, Criss found himself thus apostrophising the sacred edifice —

"And thou, St. Paul's, on whose lofty summit I have been wont to pause from my flights through the air, and alight, noblest, externally, of earth's citadels of the soul, and, within, gem of England's richest art,—thou, St. Paul's, core of the throbbing heart of this great city, thine is the glory of symbolising the victory of this people over man's worst, man's sole enemy, his own fears of the imaginary, fears which banished God from the living world to the remote past, and delivered man over a prey to the terrors of superstition; fears which magnified the spirit of evil until it took many gods to be a match for one devil; fears now happily cast out by knowledge, and the trust that comes of knowledge.

"Beneath thy capacious dome, once restricted to a name and a sect, England's sons can now meet, united in heart and method, no matter how diverse the conclusions of their intellect. Not until they found grace to withstand the wiles of priests who divided, and creeds which confounded, and to regard the best human as the most divine—were they adjudged of Providence worthy to complete and crown thee their chiefest temple. Greater even than thy physical beauty is the moral beauty that now surrounds thee, St. Paul's, at length, after long ages, thus happily completed!"

Recalling the reproach anciently brought against England as a land of grumblers, Criss saw in the discontent once so prevalent, but the outcome of the general yearning towards a higher ideal of life and faith; while in the slowness of the advance towards its realization, he saw an illustration of the national patience.

This triune combination of endowments, Patience, Self-reliance, and a high Ideal, had he perceived in the recent centuries, though often in the dark, ever been working towards the end now happily attained; until it has come that England still maintains her ancient prerogative of teaching the nations

how to live; of showing to the world that the Practical can be lawfully wedded to the Ideal; Work to Faith; Science to Reverence; and that the most fatal of errors consists in the attempt to divorce them, or to deny them the fruition of their proper affinity.

And as he thought of what such Spirit and such Work had done for the world and for England, and what a power of work was, as Avenil had said, stored up in the wealth wherewith his own hands were filled, he felt his spirit going out in eager aspiration for some worthy end to which he might devote himself, an end which would involve the redemption of at least a portion of earth, or of earth's children, from some inherited curse.

As thus, under the influence of English airs and feelings, he soared in thought towards the noblest aims, so, as if by conscious sympathy, his car rose higher and higher in the Empyrean, and his thoughts uttered themselves, in poetic rhythm: or, were they indeed voices that he heard around him, as of an invisible chorus, accompanying with angelic gratulations his high-born resolves? Criss would not gather up his analytic faculties to inquire; but left his mind open for the ideas to enter freely without effort on his part, and without seeking for their source. Afterwards, he might, if his memory retained them, commit them to writing; but at the time itself, it was his wont to do nought to break the spontaneity of their flow. Having aimed at keeping his mind in tune with the holiest and the best, what need of further effort to make it produce sweet music? Or what else was needed to win the angels into sweet converse? Nay, had he not even but now been rejecting all promptings of the lower parts of his own nature, all temptation to use for his own gratification the manifold resources of earth's various provinces so freely put at his disposal, and finally resolved to bring his own inmost into consonance with the greatest good to others? What wonder, then, if in the access of his ecstasy it should seem to him as if the angelic dwellers in those rare and sublime spheres came and ministered to him?

If Criss had doubts, they were soon resolved, for soon the invisible chorus became visible, and his old friends from the ethereal spheres flocked around him. And foremost among them was the tall angel, now no longer alone, but with his wedded sunshine clasping his arm, and ready to listen with bright and arch intelligence to her beloved's utterances as he opened to Criss some of the myteries of the perfect life.

"If by Conventionality you mean the worship of the outermost," he said in reply to Criss, "we have none such among us; at least, these higher spheres, in which I and mine dwell. For with us, all possess a law of their own inmost, to which alone allegiance is due. We reverence Matter, as that of which we and all things are composed. We reverence sensation and perception, which are faculties common to all. But we adore our own inmost, for that is to each the manifestation of the divine personality.

"Yes, we are affected by the course of events below. We do not understand how it comes about, but, somehow, good done or thought on earth radiates or vibrates sympathetically to us, and draws us nearer to the scene of it; while we recede from wilfulness and evil.

"It is a mistake to suppose that anything can subsist without a physical basis. Whatever exists is something, unless it be a mere effect. And whatever is something is material and actual. The spiritual is but an effect or operation of the material, even as the emotional is: the diviner effect of an entity already divine. For matter is divine in its origin and infinite capacity for development, involutional as well as evolutional. Differences are in degree, not in kind. There is no real without an ideal; no ideal without a real. The most sublimated among us owns kindred with the grossest elements of earth, for we have a common basis. Herein, doubtless, consists the secret of our mutual sympathy.

"The Supreme? Ah, who can tell! Even could you penetrate the abysses of yon flaming orb, and drag his secret forth, you would be no nearer to learning what the Supreme is. Yet by way of illustration the sun can help us somewhat. Once

upon a time the sun filled with his physical, bodily presence, all the space over which our system now extends, and yet more, uniformly diffused, and homogeneous in constitution. It was the all, and in all, and no other personality or entity existed therein; for it contained in nebulous potentiality all that you and we are or can be, in body and soul.

"The illustration I perceive in your thought is a fair one, and this shining cloud may be likened to the *spat* discharged by the oyster in clear water. Though to all appearance but a cloud, it contains the germs of the whole future brood. Artificial appliances enable you to magnify and discern the young creature existing in perfection, though so minute. But scarce any appliance short of infinite perception can detect the capacity for future development lying hid in the nebulous cloud of space.

"Well, this cloud contracting and changing, gradually withdrew its actual presence from the outermost portions of the vast arena, depositing as it did so, the materials for those other individualities which we now behold as Worlds. But, though withdrawing itself in one sense, its influences of power and attraction, of heat and light, still permeate and govern them all as beings distinct, yet dependent; beings not made, not begotten, but proceeding. In it and of it, they live, and move, and subsist; and the intelligences upon them, constituting their flower and fruit, best fulfil the intention of their being when they acknowledge their oneness with the rest of the Universe, and strive to fulfil to the utmost the laws which provide for their well-being and happiness.

"You are perplexed, and know not whether it is of the sun, or of the Supreme, that I speak. The Supreme is the Infinite, beyond force, beyond mind, beyond being, beyond doing, beyond language, beyond ideas; while the sun, though a complete individual in itself, is but one of many; one member of a great family, a part and not the whole. Remember that whatever there is in you, or in us, now, in our present state, that, in some form or other, was in the original nebula out of which we are formed, that nebula being but a portion of the infinite,

detached from the parent mass, and provided with the capacity necessary to enable it to evolve a perfect individuality of its own. Call it sun, or call it Supreme, you must believe that whatever exists consists of something, or you make God a negation. Matter is not contemptible. It is as the root to the flower; and the flower of matter is the soul. Matter, therefore, is the basis of spirit. It is the basis also of duty. On yonder earth, to which you belong, lies your highest, your sole, duty in the present."

Here Criss suddenly found himself alone, but in the presence of a smile that seemed to beam upon him and warm him to the heart; a smile as from an unseen face; until, as he descended towards the earth, it clothed itself in features which at first he took for those of his tall angel friend's angel bride, and then for those of the fair girl he had left shedding passionate tears on the slopes of Atlantika.

On approaching the surface of the earth and examining the configuration of the land, he found that the currents had wafted him near to the ranges of the Lebanon. At this he was greatly excited. Lebanon! Palestine! Jerusalem! the home of his own race! Away then, quick, to the city of his ancestors: the cradle of all the mid-time religions!

"Ancestors! Parents!" thought Criss. "Ah, me; why is it that I have no near kindred to call beloved, to please and to be proud of? Ah, if I could only find some, however poor and destitute, to share—nay, to claim—all this wealth, which to me is but a burden; for if such live, surely it is theirs rather than mine. Oh, if my father still exists—no other parent can—what joy to find him and tell him that a portion, at least, of her he loved, still survives. I wonder why I have never before yearned towards an earthly parent; least of all towards an earthly father. Of a possible mother I have sometimes thought with longing, but never of a father, save of the supreme Father of all. Can it be that the very absence of the tender relations of humanity has served to throw me more into the arms of an

ideal and spiritual father; or that in kindness I have been compensated for the loss? It has not been unknown before that one deprived of sweet parental reciprocities, has been caught up, as it were, in spirit, and made one with the divine soul of all; driven by the absence of the longed-for real, with sweet compulsion to the ideal. I am sure that my father must have been noble of spirit. At least, I will endeavor so to live, that, be he noble as he might, I shall not be unworthy of him. Now to descend into Jerusalem."

CHAPTER III.

In a city of the importance and extent of Jerusalem, an arrival, whether by land or air, attracted no attention. Alighting in the courtyard of what he perceived to be one of the principal hotels, the *Royal Arab*, which he selected on reading its sign from aloft, as likely by its name to be frequented by Central Africans, Criss was presently installed in quarters deemed sufficiently luxurious for a young man travelling alone in an aëromotive. He dined by himself in the public salon, and during his meal read the day's papers. These, he found, were much taken up with the revolution in Bornou, and expressed fears that it seemed likely to extend through Soudan, even to Abyssinia, hitherto reckoned an invincibly conservative part of the Empire, on account of its being the primary source and foundation of the Imperial family and system.

But what most excited his interest, was the account of an interview which had taken place on the previous evening between the fugitive prince and the Soudan bondholders' committee, in which much bitterness had been expressed on both sides towards the intervening State of Egypt, as the secret fosterer of the insurrection. The Jewish journals, too, one and all, seemed to have jumped at an opportunity for exhibiting the bitterness still remaining from the ancient feud between Israel

and Egypt. As the press of Jerusalem was known to be devoted to the interests of the capitalists, it was easy for those who were familiar with local politics, to guess that some special and definite purpose lay behind this new outburst of animosity. What that purpose might be, Criss knew not, but he knew that the allied states of Palestine and Soudan were restrained from joining in an attack upon Egypt only by the fact that Egypt was a member of the European confederacy, and in the opinion of the grand council had committed no fault worthy to justify an appeal to arms. Egypt might be a bad neighbor, but the law cannot be invoked to transform such into good neighbors, in national, any more than in individual life. A similar difficulty arose many years ago, on the abolition of duelling among private persons. Ill-conditioned people ventured upon conduct from which they had previously been restrained by fear of the consequences. Egypt knew that she could not be called to account for mere churlishness. For the law to interfere, she must behave very much worse than she had yet done.

Finding himself in the same city with the crown prince of Abyssinia—for such was the title of the heir to the throne—Criss became desirous of making his acquaintance, but without revealing himself. He perceived that his accidental connection with the late Emperor, and possession of the sacred gems, to say nothing of the mysterious link apparently existing between their families, placed him in a position to exert considerable influence; but he felt that to be able to use that influence for good, he must retain his secret until some supreme and fitting crisis for its revelation.

He was thus in some difficulty; for he could not seek a formal introduction without giving a sufficient reason; and to give as a reason his meeting with the prince's father, would be to expose himself to questionings respecting the property the Emperor had carried off in his flight, and committed to Criss's care, as already related. Moreover Criss was ignorant whether the knowledge the Emperor had shown of his name, as owner of the diamonds, was shared by the prince, or any of the Jewish upholders of his crown.

This last consideration led him to suppress his given name of Christmas, and enter himself in the hotel book simply as Mr. Carol, of London. He would learn the character and prospects of the prince before committing himself in any way to him. But how, then, was he to obtain the desired introduction?

After much cogitation, he bethought himself of his friends at Atlantika, Nannie and her relatives, the Hazeltines; and he decided that he would approach the prince for the purpose of learning his opinion respecting the possible danger to them through the known hostility of the insurgents. However, it was reserved for accident to do what he required without his putting himself forward in any way.

Criss had not ordered any coffee after his dinner; nevertheless, the waiter brought him some. Immersed in his reflections, Criss did not perceive that he had got what he had not ordered, until the waiter came and with many apologies took it away again, saying he had brought it by mistake: it was ordered by the other gentleman.

Taking no notice of the incident, Criss continued to reflect, until recalled by some conversation at a neighboring table, the only one besides his own now occupied, for the rest of the diners had gone out to smoke in the verandah.

"I should like to see the gentleman the man took for me and gave my coffee to," said the occupant of the other table in a tone of more asperity, it struck Criss, than the circumstances warranted; a tone, apparently, of one not accustomed to be crossed.

"He sits yonder, your highness," replied the master of the house, who had come in person to explain the waiter's mistake, while the attendants remained standing in a group near the entrance to the salon, evidently, now that Criss had looked up to see what was going on, curiously examining the two visitors.

The stranger looked towards Criss, and their eyes met in a steady scrutinizing gaze.

Presently the other said, manifestly with the design of being overheard,—

"Have you apologized to that gentleman for your mistake? No? Then I will do so."

And getting up he approached Criss with an air of mingled dignity and deference.

"The servants, in excuse for the blunder they have made about our coffee, plead a resemblance between us, which they declare to be extraordinary. But perhaps my Arabic speech is lost upon you?"

Criss rose as the stranger addressed him. The two young men fastened their eyes intently upon each other. The group of attendants involuntarily drew near. The resemblance in face, figure, and voice, was so extraordinary as to strike both the bystanders and the young men themselves. Criss, however, thanks to the Greek infusion in his blood, was of a fairer complexion, and a more refined and spiritual expression. Both were dressed in the prevailing costume of Europe.

"No apology is necessary," answered Criss, in the same language, "unless it be for the liberty I have taken in bearing any likeness to you. But pray do not remain standing. I am a stranger, a traveller just arrived, and shall be happy to take some coffee in your company."

"A stranger? a traveller? and from where may I ask?" said the other with a curious eagerness, taking the proffered seat at Criss's table.

"From England, my home. But I presume, by your addressing me in Arabic, that I am not speaking to one of my own country?"

"No, but to one who admires and respects your country," said the stranger. "I am an Abyssinian by descent, and, like yourself, a stranger and a traveller, having lately left my own land in consequence of the troubles there. You, probably, feel little interest in them. It seems strange, though, that two persons of such different origin should be sufficiently alike to be mistaken for each other."

Criss remarked that he believed he had some oriental and southern blood in him, which might account for the likeness; and added that he took a great interest in Central African pol-

itics, and that not merely because he had friends settled there, for whose safety he was concerned, but because he had himself seen a little of the country, and conceived a respect for the character of its royal family.

"By your general look and mode of speech, I should certainly have taken you for one of my own people," returned the other, in terms which Criss recognized as almost identical with those which the late Emperor had used to him.

The stranger went on to ask him about his calling or station, and Criss expressed himself as being often amused at being taken for a courier, as his fancy for aërial yachting—a taste not uncommon among English gentlemen—caused to be the case; and added that the last occasion on which this occurred was in passing over Bournou during the outbreak of the insurrection, when he had given cause for the supposition by stopping over the post office and letting down a line for mails.

"And since that where have you been?"

"With my friends in England," said Criss; "but I ought to introduce myself in form. I am an Englishman, on an aërial cruise. My home is London; my name Carol." And Criss colored a little, conscious that the unwonted candor of his advances was contrived in order to get the other to declare himself.

"I, too, am a traveller and a gentleman," said the stranger, "and I have already said that I belong to Soudan, and am here through family and political misfortunes. Excuse me for saying," he continued with a slight smile, "that you appear to me to be one who has never experienced a sense of misfortune. But I should not therefore judge you as incapable of sympathy."

"Misfortune of my own," returned Criss, with emphasis, "I have never known. Misfortune of others it is my greatest happiness to sympathize with, and, if possible, to alleviate."

"You, probably, have never lost parent, place, or fortune. I have lost all three. At least I fear the worst for the first."

"Do you mind telling me all?" said Criss, already prepossessed in the stranger's favor, and divining that the

other was only desirous to be certain that his confidence would not be abused. "Fortune and place are not irrecoverable at your—at our age; but a parent—a father—ah! that is a blessing I have never known. But you speak of his fate as if still in suspense."

"I am already known to too many in Jerusalem," said the stranger, "for it to be a secret much longer, and I am predisposed to give you my full confidence. It is rare to meet an English gentleman who has visited my capital. If my father be living, I am Crown Prince of Abyssinia; if he be dead, I am, nominally at least, Emperor of Soudan and Abyssinia."

At this Criss rose, and respectfully taking the hand of the stranger, was about to touch it with his lips; but the prince withdrew it, saying:

"Nay, such homage is with us reserved for the Emperor himself. I hope, though almost against hope, that he still lives."

Regaining possession of his hand, Criss kissed it solemnly, saying:

"Emperor of Soudan and Abyssinia, I proffer the homage that is your due. Your father, the late Emperor, is no more!"

"You speak positively! How can you know this?"

"The Emperor escaped, wounded and alone, in a flying machine. Crossing the Sahara to Algiers, he committed himself to the care of the British Minister there. The Minister and his physician did their best to save him. He died of his wounds two days before Christmas. I was there when he arrived, and knew the fact. I knew who he was, for he gave me his confidence as I tended him. The Minister will certify it to you whenever you afford him the opportunity."

"Alone! wounded! My poor father! Were you present when he died?"

"No; immensely to my regret, I was compelled to be in England on that very day. But I was with him until the latest possible moment, and at his request had promised to return the instant I was free. I seemed to have won his confidence. He remarked my resemblance to his family. But I never saw him again. The Minister sent to inform me of his death."

"It is scarcely credible that he should have guided himself so far in safety, even had he not been wounded. But your account of his escape tallies with the fact that he was last seen entering the tower where the crown jewels are kept, for I know that there was an old flying machine in a chamber at the top, kept there as a curiosity, I supposed. But now it seems as if he had a purpose in keeping it there. Yet I never was led to think he anticipated revolution. How strange is this accidental meeting with one able to give such information!"

"As strange," said Criss, "as the coincidence of my lighting upon this particular country and city, and entering this particular hotel, at the moment of your being here. Yet all these coincidences would have led to nothing but for the servant's mistake about the coffee."

"And that, again," remarked the prince, "would not have occurred but for the likeness between us. But in what way, may I ask, is your arrival here accidental? Did you not mean to come to Jerusalem?"

Then Criss told him of his love for aërial navigation, and how that, being free from the necessity of working for his living, he spent much time in travelling. That on this particular occasion, having recently come of age, he had ascended in his car, in order to meditate on the best way of disposing of his life so as to be most useful in the world; and that, after being many hours at a great height in the air, carried about at will by the currents, he found, on returning to the earth, that he was close to Jerusalem, and having, as he believed, some Jewish blood in him, he resolved to visit the ancient capital of his race.

The prince took a lively interest in his recital, and said he envied him the liberty he turned to such good account. "But what," he asked, "is the resolve to which you came?"

"Nothing very definite, I fear," said Criss, "beyond a resolution to do my best."

"What blood have you in you besides Jewish?" asked the prince, somewhat abruptly.

"Mostly Greek, I believe," was the answer.

"No Egyptian, or anything to lead you to sympathise with Egypt?"

"None whatever. Next to the land of my home, my sympathies are all with the two races I have named."

"I am glad to think there is no barrier to your serving me. I consider I have a claim, since you served my father."

"I will serve you with my whole heart," said Criss, "provided I serve mankind by doing so."

"I recognize the propriety of the reservation. It proves your English training. I have no vocation to be a tyrant; at least, I think not. But those Egyptians ought to be punished. They are the cause of my troubles now, as they have been of all my country's troubles for the last five or six thousand years."

And, started on the topic which constituted a deep sore in his mind, he rapidly recounted the wrongs done to Abyssinia by Egypt, the catalogue of which he declared to be treasured up in the memories of all good and educated Abyssinians. And thus, talking far into the night, he told Criss how, in times long gone by, the mountain strongholds of his country had been a refuge for the kings of Egypt when driven out of their own land by the Bedouin Hyksos; and how the shepherd kings in their turn had been driven out when, refreshed and regenerated in their highland retreat, the successors of the refugee Pharaohs had descended with an army into Egypt, and recovered the land from the Arab invaders. How that these kings, again, had sought universal dominion, and overrun the world, from the Indus to the Niger; in their ingratitude enslaving Soudan itself, which had proved so good a friend to them in their adversity. And how Soudan, rebelling, at length forced Egypt to acknowledge its independence. Then he told him how, reinforced by the Greeks, Egypt, under Psammiticus, had once more forced its way even to the Nubian Meroe, when it was compelled to give up the contest, and retire to its own limits.

"Its own, do I say?" he exclaimed with vivacity. "Egypt has nothing of its own; not even the soil of its land. Were it not for the sediment which the Blue Nile has for myriads of

ages been carrying down from our mountains, Egypt would have no geographical existence. It would be but a patch of the sandy desert. It is to the Nile that flows, clear and bright, from the great lakes far to the south, and to the Nile that we yearly load with rich earth, that this ungrateful land owes all it ever possessed, even to its own existence. And now it refuses us a transit for our goods through its canal, except at an exorbitant cost, and will not let us construct a second one. It refuses us leave to make a railway through its worthless plains, but forces us to carry our produce by ferry across the Red Sea, and transport it by railway through Arabia to the Persian Gulf, before it can reach the Mediterranean; for even this is cheaper than the transit through Egypt. Then, by means of its agents, it fosters seditions and revolution in our country. The Jews, too, hate it, even more, if possible, than we do. From the days when their ancestors were enslaved by it, and the days when it cut down the forests of Lebanon to build the navy wherewith to conquer India and the Mediterranean, to the days when the independence and prosperity of Judæa are assured in spite of its utmost exertions, the Jews hate it, even as the people of Islam ever hated the Jews. Why, Egypt levies high toll upon every item of the wealth that pours through it into Europe, from the rich provinces of Madagascar and Eastern Africa, or to them from Europe. Believe me, nothing but the fear of the Confederacy of Nations has kept us from destroying Egypt by force of arms.

"Oh, if ever I am restored to power I shall take care that it be not again endangered by this ungrateful people! The Nile is ours. Every drop of its water, every grain of its fertilizing sediment, comes to them from us; for they have no single stream of their own—no soil but barren sand. Let them beware! Vengeance will not tarry for ever!"

CHAPTER IV.

The first portion of that night, after parting from his new friend, was passed by Criss in that anxious meditation which possesses so much in common with earnest prayer; the latter part, in the quiet sleep which was habitual to him. But it was only when his mind had attained the goal of resolve that his body sank into the repose of sleep. Could it be that in this young and uncrowned Emperor he had found his mission, and perhaps his relative, sole upon earth? The thought brought no joy to him, save in so far as it indicated a duty to be fulfilled, and a subject worthy of affection. What did trouble Criss was the frame of mind which misfortune seemed to have evoked in the prince. He could not conceive of himself as breathing out threatenings and slaughter against any individual, under any circumstances. Much less could he comprehend the mood that personified a whole people, and sought to inflict vengeance upon them as upon a personal foe. Surely, if no other duty presented itself to him, to mitigate the imperial ferocity was a duty worthy of all his solicitude. Criss felt that he was not altogether powerless to promote his restoration. Could the prince by such agency be restored to his throne a better man, nations would be the better for Criss having lived.

The morning's telegraphic intelligence from the revolted capital, gave a new direction to Criss's thoughts. The insurgent government was determined to punish the foreign settlers for their sympathy with the late dynasty, and coldness towards the new regime; and an expedition was to start at once for the wealthy settlements of the whites in the mountains. Atlantika, as the leading district, was to be the first to suffer.

Criss's eyes became dimmed as he beheld in imagination the fair regions he had so lately visited, ravaged by war, their smiling homesteads blackened by fire and stained with blood,

and their happy, prosperous occupants——Ah!—and here a pang shot through him as he thought of Nannie, the passionate, wayward Nannie: she of the sunny smile and April eyes, who resembled the fairest angel of his sweetest visions,—Nannie in danger, perchance a fugitive, alone and foodless, amid rough mountains and horrid infested woods, her wealth of golden hair streaming behind her as on bleeding feet she fled from barbarous negro ravishers, and seeing no salvation on earth, gazing with wild looks into heaven as if thence only, even as once before, a deliverer might come. And shall she look in vain? No! thundered the heart of Criss, as, starting from the trance in which he seemed to have seen all these things as vividly as with his bodily eyes, he rose and hastened to prepare for an immediate start to Soudan.

His preparations consisted in paying his hotel bill, and dispatching a telegram to Avenil, begging him to back with promptest endeavor any movement of the Council of Confederated Nations for saving the European settlers in Central Africa from the destruction with which they were menaced by the insurgents of Bornou, whither he was now proceeding. On leaving the writing-room after despatching his message, he found himself running against his acquaintance of the previous evening, of whose existence he had for the moment become oblivious.

"Forgotten me already?" said the prince. "You look as absorbed in your thoughts as if you too had a kingdom to recover."

"Your highness will pardon me," returned Criss. "The news from Bornou is bad for my countrymen. I am starting for the hills, to see if I can aid my friends. I have little doubt of being able to return in a few days,—probably three or four,—and then I shall be at your highness's service, for any good that we can do together." And Criss put a marked emphasis on the word *good*.

The prince gazed on him with a strange and almost troubled look, but did not immediately speak. As Criss divined, his thoughts were apologetic, for presently he said,—

"Ah, that good, cool England has given you the discipline that is very difficult of acquirement in our ardent Soudan. . I think that I must have an English counsellor,—that is, when I am restored. But how long will it take you to get there? and what do you expect to do alone? I shall be very sorry to lose you again so soon. I could wish you to remain by me, for I feel strangely drawn towards you. Do you know what will constitute your chief danger if taken by the rebels?"

Criss shook his head.

"Your resemblance to me. I see it more strongly to-day even than last night. But you are the handsomer of the two. That Greek dash has done you a good turn. And I suspect you are the better of the two. You have been *improved*. I claim only to be improvable."

"Show yourself so, and I shall love you and serve you truly," said Criss, his eyes beaming on the prince with an ineffable tenderness. "Show yourself so, and you will have no cause to regret your present misfortunes, be they temporary or not."

"You speak to me as equal to equal. Pray does every Englishman hold himself a king?"

"Many are more than kings, for they are superior to all dictation, save that of their own consciences. Is there aught of commission that your royal highness desires to entrust to me?"

"My friends are organizing a force to support me," returned the prince. "The only question is whether I ought to return and place myself at their head. They advise delay until they are stronger. I wish to do what is best for the country and the dynasty. This very day I hold a conference with the bondholders' committee on the subject. Otherwise I should be inclined to beg a passage with you. Could you take me in your car?"

Criss was startled by the singularity of the coincidence, by which the son sought to return in the same conveyance which had aided the father's flight. But he only said,—

"Best wait my return. I will tell you exactly how affairs stand. For the present, farewell."

The prince insisted on seeing him off. On beholding the

Ariel, he exclaimed warmly in praise of its exquisite combination of diminutiveness, strength and elegance.

"Surely it is unsurpassed," he said.

"It is unequalled," replied Criss; and was about to start, when the prince said,—

"Have you any arms?"

"None; only instruments and tools to meet various emergencies. I hate the idea of personal violence, and cannot imagine myself having recourse to it under any circumstances, not even in self-defence."

"That is because you have always lived in civilized and peaceful lands. Now you are going into barbarism and danger. People who behave as wild beasts must be treated as such. But whether as a weapon, or as a remembrance of me, pray accept and wear this pistol, at least until we meet again. If not for yourself, you may need it for others."

The last remark decided Criss, and buckling round him the weapon, which was an explosive multiplier of the finest make and utmost potency, he entered his car. As he was quitting the ground, a thought struck him, and he said to the prince,—

"Should it be needful for you to return, and I be prevented from coming for you, will you entrust yourself to the agent I purpose to employ?"

"I will trust you and your agent implicitly," said the prince, "Only let me know the situation, before I decide upon returning. The bondholders here have a claim to influence my movements."

Mounted aloft, Criss referred to his chart, his compass, and his chronometer.

"Nearly thirty degrees south-west, and now nine A. M. At the rate of two degrees an hour, I shall not reach Yolo until midnight. There is no twilight there, and I must arrive before dark, if possible. Now to see the direction and probable force of the winds." And he consulted his chart of atmospheric currents.

To his great satisfaction he found that by flying at a certain

elevation, he would have the aid of a north-east current, which at that season of the year blew steadily and strongly.

Referring to his barometer, he ascended to the requisite height, where, putting on a high speed, he travelled in his course for an hour. He then took observations to ascertain the distance he had covered. The movements of the air at such altitudes are not to be judged by the corresponding movements called *winds* below. Beyond the reach of retardation by friction with the earth's surface, the great currents aloft sweep along unimpeded at rates which here would make hurricane and disaster.

"Four degrees in the hour," said Criss, joyously. "Oh, current, only hold thus, and before sundown the goal will be in sight.

CHAPTER V.

On the eve of the day which saw Criss hasting with all speed to the succor of his friends, were held two councils of war. One in the Bornou capital by the leaders of the insurrection. The other by fugitive planters from the white settlements, high up on the slopes of Atlantika, where, in a natural fortress of rocks, camp fires were kept burning to scare off wild beasts, and temper the keen mountain air for the women and children who crowded, scared, around them. Now that the trial was come, the young women who had been so eager to add military practice to their other accomplishments, found their hearts fail them, and this so utterly that they quite forgot to resent the cool matter-of-course way in which the men left them entirely out of their calculations in the measures they adopted for defence. Curiously enough, somehow, the men did not think the worse of the other sex for thus vindicating itself. For no reproaches passed between them on the subject.

It was known in the mountain that the insurgent forces

might be expected at any hour. Of a prolonged resistance the whites were hopeless. They relied mainly upon the material aid, or threats equally efficacious, of the Council of Confederated Nations, to which they had dispatched an urgent appeal by telegraph. The Council not being in session, it had to be specially summoned. This had caused delay. When met, it acted with the utmost promptitude and energy; for it dispatched a powerful aërial squadron to Bornou, with instructions to rescue or avenge the settlers, and destroy the capital unless the leaders of the revolution guaranteed the liberty, lives, and property of the entire foreign population of the country. With internal politics it was not to meddle.

On the mountain, the consultation was about the appeal and the chances of its having reached its destination; and also of their ability to hold out until the arrival of succor.

In the capital, the consultation was between the leaders of the revolt, who already were divided among themselves on two important points; one, the policy of incurring the hostility of Europe by ill-treating the whites; the other, the advisability of declaring the young prince Emperor, in the event of his complying with certain conditions; and this whether his father were dead or not.

Criss had crossed the Libyan desert when he became sensible of a great diminution of his speed. He judged rightly that the heat of the Sahara had, by creating a current on its own surface, deflected or reversed the current with which he had been travelling.

He could not now reach the point at which he aimed before nightfall; and he was doubtful whether he could find that point in the dark. Descending towards the earth in search of the favorable winds which had failed him aloft, and which were likely to be prevalent on the Sahara, it occurred to him that it might be possible to hold communication with his friends in the settlement, and ascertain before-hand their precise situation. The vast development of the telegraphic system rendered it impossible that the insurgents should have cut all the wires, even

if they had wished to do so, and there might be at hand means of communicating direct with the plantation, without risk of interception in the capital. He remembered that the central office of the hill district was close to the Elephant farm, and under the supervision of Nannie's brother-in-law; and his telegraph-guide informed him that Atlantika, being the highest mountain of the range, was provided with the usual convenience for aëronauts.

The sun was getting low when the desert blasts became sufficiently lulled for the mist of sand to abate, and the atmosphere clear enough for him to scan the ground as he skimmed along near the surface. Soon he caught sight of a large white building, which he recognized as the place of a well. It was scarcely doubtful that it would contain also a telegraph station, for in that thirsty land a well is the only possible halting place. The presence of travellers, however, might make it unsafe for him to descend and communicate.

Examining with his glasses the inscription on the roof of the building, so placed in immense letters for the benefit of aëronauts, Criss was pleased to find that he had not deviated in any wise from his direct course, and that the well was in a locality whose inhabitants owed much to the late Emperor: for it was the well of *Kebir*, in the country of the *Tebu*. But he had still two-fifths of his journey to accomplish.

A large caravan was halting at the well, such being even then the usual method of locomotion between the provinces of *Fezzan* and *Darfur*. Halting at some height, Criss perceived that the caravan was waiting for the night, to pursue its toilsome way. Camels, disburdened of their loads, lay about with their noses resting on the bales of goods, and beside them, in the shadow of their huge bodies, reposed the drivers. Evidently it was but a caravan of merchandize, and therefore peacefully disposed.

Approaching close enough to parley, Criss learnt that a very large party even among the insurgents were believed to be favorable to a restoration; and in return for this news he told them the Emperor was dead, and the young prince at Jerusalem holding himself in readiness to return and head his party.

In answer to his enquiries respecting the telegraphs, they, after an examination of the wire-labels, told him that he could telegraph direct to the plantation station below Atlantika, and they offered to dispatch any message Criss wished, if his journey was too urgent to allow him to come down and do it himself.

Criss said it was true that he was in great haste, but the message he had to send was in English, and therefore it was necessary for him to communicate it himself. Would they, therefore, be so good as to attach the wire he would let down, to the wire which communicated with the Atlantika station, as he had a battery in his car?

This done, Criss sent two messages; one for Hazeltine himself, and another for transmission to the Summit, in case the settlers had deemed it expedient to form an encampment on the mountain. Criss did not suppose the settlement could be deserted altogether; and even if no one were present when the message arrived, it would record itself, and be legible to the first comer. As for the Summit telegraphs, they are constructed to call attention by exploding a signal. In both messages Criss requested that a beacon might be fired on the top of the mountain towards midnight, when they might look out for him. But he received no acknowledgment in return.

CHAPTER VI.

Even amid the dangers of the insurrection, Nannie, with her wonted wilfulness, refused to regulate her conduct by that of the rest of the girls of the settlement. She laughed at their fears, refused to believe in the approach of any enemy, and declared that she would justify her nickname of Wild-cat, by remaining in her home after everybody else had deserted it. The body of settlers were already on their march up the mountain when her absence was observed by some of the neighbors.

"Where is Nannie?" they asked of her brother-in-law.

"She prefers to stay at home, for once."

"But surely some one had better go back for her."

"Not if you want her to come," was his response. "Nannie has a way of pleasing herself. Our best chance is to let her alone."

They appealed to her sister, who with looks the reverse of cheerful, was riding in a covered wagon with her children.

The only answer they got from her was,—

"Nannie knows what she is about. It is pleasanter there than here, and I dare say quite as safe."

The neighbors looked at each other significantly, and said no more. As Nannie's relations did not show concern, it was not for others to do so. So they held on their way, none of the young men venturing to volunteer on a quest of such doubtful acceptance. Besides, there was a general conviction that Nannie would follow them when she got tired of being by herself.

The night and the day passed without molestation, and the party had leisure to occupy and fortify a strong position high up on the mountain side, whence they could with their glasses descry the railroad from the capital, and any military demonstration that might approach from that quarter. Fortunately it was not the season for rains; and the fear of animals being less than the fear of the enemy, the camp fires were early extinguished.

So things went until towards midnight on the day after their arrival, and no Nannie had made an appearance. Then came an alarm. A bright glare lit up the mountain-top, yet a considerable distance above them, and, by reason of precipitous cliffs, inaccessible on that side. While they were wondering what the light could mean, screams were heard; then a succession of shots; and presently all was quiet, and the glare died away. Some of the party had fancied they had heard a shot or an explosion in the earlier part of the evening. Conjectures were active for a time, but no attack or demonstration followed, and the alarm was not renewed. Only Nannie's sister had, with blanched cheek, whispered to her husband,—

"I am certain that was Nannie's voice."

The alarm of the night was forgotten in the excitement of the morning, when train after train appeared moving up towards the station at the foot of the mountain, and bands of soldiers disembarked from them, and formed into lines with the manifest purpose of ascending the slope. This was the signal for removing the women and children to a yet greater height, so that they might be out of the reach of injury by the expected assault. These had not been long up there, before they sent word down to say that they had discovered the cause of last night's alarm; for they had found the telegraph station on the summit burnt down, and the bodies of three negroes killed either by lightning or by gun shots.

Strange to say, the enemy, instead of advancing, made a long halt in their ranks at the foot of the hill station. Then, breaking into groups, they appeared by their vehement gesticulations, to be engaged in hot controversy together. Presently, to the still greater astonishment of the settlers, they set to work deliberately to prepare a meal.

While the fugitives were marvelling what the delay and apparent change of purpose meant, an aëromotive hove in sight, coming straight from the capital towards the mountain. Their best glasses failed to make out its character and occupants. Arrived directly over the insurgent camp, but considerably below the position held by the planters, the car stopped, and a conversation took place, which manifestly roused the interest of the troops to the utmost pitch. On its termination, the whole force broke into rounds of ringing cheers, and very explosions of shouts. The car then proceeded on its course, and approached the party on the mountain with the evident intention of joining it.

CHAPTER VII.

Nannie did not herself comprehend the feeling which made her remain in the settlement when every one else fled from it; but Nannie was one whose fancies were to her as inspirations, and who, when she had a fancy, felt that she must give way to it, or else go beside herself.

"It must be so, because I think it."

"I know it is true, because I dreamt it."

These were her usual formulæ. Talk to her of being reasonable, and her lovely mouth would curl with ineffable disdain, as she exclaimed,—

"Reasonable! a woman's business is to feel, not reason."

With this creed she was born, and in it she had grown up, refusing all culture of mind, all discipline of habit; yet in native quickness of perception so far surpassing all around her as often to justify the contempt she openly expressed for their inferiority and slowness.

"Logs! They are all logs compared to me," she would exclaim when any other woman was mentioned as capable of doing anything whatever. And her bright eyes would flash, and her bright hair cristle, and every dainty limb quiver with excitement, as she asserted the thoroughness of her own womanhood, to the despite of every example that could be quoted in comparison with her.

Her outward resemblance to her sister was very great, but in character Nannie was the less self-considering of the two. Her sister was not incapable of being selfish by intention. Nannie was never selfish, except through the impetuous heedlessness which was apt to cause as much annoyance and distress to others as if she had intended to hurt them. All heart as she was, and was proud of knowing herself to be, she was not the less likely to be the cause of unhappiness to herself and those she loved, than if her heart had been under the dominion of a head, and

that head proportioned in a way to shock all phrenological proprieties.

After the evacuation of the settlement, Nannie roamed about prying into the neighboring houses and gardens, fondling the deserted and wondering animals, and not hesitating to break a window and force an entry wherever she espied a cat or a bird gazing wistfully on the unwonted solitude. More than one tame elephant and other huge beast acknowledged her as their deliverer. Loading herself with provisions suited to their various tastes, she went through the avenues followed by a crowd of animals, whom she petted and teased by turns. Thus the time passed, until the second evening approached, and she began to tire of their sole companionship. So, finding herself back at her home, she took refuge in the telegraph office, a place she was always longing to explore, principally because her brother-in-law, dreading her reckless inquisitiveness, had strictly forbidden her to enter it.

Here at length, after committing various antics with the instruments by way of experiment, being completely tired out, she fell fast asleep on a rocking chair, close alongside the signal tell-tale, and was soon far away in the world of dreams, a world that with her possessed a reality even more vivid than the world of her waking hours.

Nannie had ever been a wild dreamer, and there was a perfect consistency between her dreaming and her waking characters; for, as when awake her fancies would ever insist on being transmuted into facts, so when asleep her visions revealed themselves in movements and utterances. In short, she was addicted to talking and walking in her sleep; and this through no morbid affection or cerebral disturbance, but solely through her being so intensely alive in every atom of her composition, that it was scarcely possible for the whole of her to be asleep at once. She suggested the notion of one of those zoophytic creatures, each piece of which, on its being cut up, becomes a living and entire animal.

Since her adventure at sea and rescue by Criss, she had

become conscious of some change in her moods, both waking and sleeping. There were even moments when she felt her wildness vanish almost entirely away; and she soon discovered that these unwonted accessions of docility were contemporaneous with her reminiscences of Criss. Sometimes her sister caught her still and thinking for a minute or two together, and on twitting her with her seriousness, Nannie would color and exclaim,—

"Oh, I daresay he is a log, like the rest. I hate logs."

But who the *he* was, she did not reveal.

On the present occasion, Nannie was dreaming of her voyage through the air, and of the dark-skinned, bright-eyed young man who sat aloft in the rigging, leaving her the comfortable car all to herself, and patiently answered all her questions, and listened to her fitful discourse. Then she dreamt of herself crying wildly in the garden on his departure, and declaring that he must be a log, or he wouldn't have gone away at all; and then of her rage with herself for seeming to care, when in reality she did not care a bit, and only cried,—she did not know why; she supposed the tears came of themselves; she did not want them to come. And then, red and white with mingled emotions, she started from her sleep, crying out,—

"Yes! yes! What is it? I am coming! Quick! quick!"

For the magnetic alarum beside her was sounding its sharp appeal, in token that a message had just inscribed itself upon the recording tablet.

Nannie was soon wide enough awake to remember where she was, and to guess what had happened. Darting eagerly towards the tablet, she found herself gasping for breath as she saw Criss's name, and then read his message from the desert well.

"Oh, those stupid, stupid people; to all go away and leave no one to mind the messages," she exclaimed. "Criss, dear, good, stupid Criss, coming to help us, and he will go floundering about in the dark, looking for the mountain; and there is no one to light the beacon, or send his message on to the summit station. How I wish I had learnt to use the thing. All the other girls here know it. Why did they let me grow up so ignorant? I don't seem to have ever been taught anything."

And here she stopped in her tirade, and colored violently, for she remembered that it was solely her own fault in always persistently refusing instruction.

Then seizing the wire which communicated with the summit, she applied the magnetic battery to it; but in trying to use the instrument, she puzzled in vain over the letters necessary to indicate the message. Then she cried with vexation, for she thought the settlers might already be on the top of the mountain, and it only needed that she should send on the message for them to fire the beacon for Criss's guidance. Her next thought was, that perhaps they would not go so high up, and that the message would be of no use, even if it got there, through the absence of some one to receive and act upon it.

This last reflection quite overcame her patience; and seizing the battery and the wires, she dashed them vehemently down, as stupid, useless creatures. Nannie did know that though she could not transmit the message, she had exploded the message-signal on the summit.

Then sinking into the chair in which she had lately been sleeping, she meditated.

"I'll do it myself," she cried, starting up with a determined air. "I'll outwit them yet!"

She had not employed precisely the phrase that expressed her meaning; but it was natural to Nannie to inveigh against circumstances as if they were persons, and evilly disposed towards her.

Another hour saw Nannie, laden with matches and combustibles, resolutely trudging up the mountain, by a path with which she was well acquainted, but which lay at a distance from that taken by the fugitives. It was quite dark, and she knew it would take her two or three hours to reach the top; but the thought of being useful to Criss sustained her, and she did not doubt of accomplishing her purpose by the time he had specified in his message. She was animated, too, by a sense of triumph over those who would have induced her to leave the settlement with them, and of the now proved superiority of her instinct to their reason.

Much of the track by which she had to travel, was rough with sharp stones, and tangled with creeping plants—impediments she had never discovered in her daylight journeys—and Nannie, in her eagerness to get on her way, had neglected to provide herself with shoes fitted for such work. By the time she reached the summit station, her little feet were bleeding from many a cut, her clothes torn, and her body bruised with many a heavy tumble; but her big heart never faltered, or let her fears prompt her to turn back, or even to join the fugitives, whom she perceived to be encamped at no great distance on another part of the mountain.

The station was in a little wooden hut, known as the *chapel*, from having been built several generations back by the missionaries, who had been instrumental in converting that country from Islamism to Christianity, partly for devotional purposes, and partly to shelter persons caught in the storms, which at that elevation are wont to be of tremendous violence. It was of dry pine, and highly inflammable, as Nanny happened to know through the fierceness with which it had burnt, and the difficulty with which it had been saved, when accidentally set on fire once by a picnic party, at which she had been present as a child.

A few yards from the hut was a ledge of stone, on which it was the wont of excursionists to make their fires for cooking, and it was on this ledge that Nannie prepared to make the beacon required by Criss.

Wanting light to enable her to see in order to collect fuel from the surrounding thickets, she commenced by making a small fire on the stone. To her great dismay, she found that, with all her searching and gathering, the utmost she could obtain was barely sufficient to keep this alive; and her idea of a beacon very properly involved a blaze that could be seen far and wide.

After a little while, it surpassed her resources to maintain even this little fire. Rushing into the neighboring thicket, she lighted match after match against any tree that she thought might be dry enough to burn. But all was of no use, and at last, fairly beaten, she sat down by the smouldering embers on the

stone, and began to cry. Depressed by disappointment, a sense of her desolation and loneliness now came vividly over her, and to her other woes added that of terror. That Criss might fail to carry out his design never occurred to her. She was entirely occupied with the idea of him hovering round in the dark, and feeling, as it were, for the summit whereon to alight.

But, hark! A sound! And her heart beat as she prepared to scream loudly in response to his signal. Ah! it is only the public clock of the settlement, far below and miles away, booming the hour.

Mechanically Nannie counted the strokes. "Twelve! Midnight! Why, he was to be here towards midnight! Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!"

A thought strikes her. Another minute, and the thought has become a deed. And now, with a fierce roar, the flames of the burning chapel are darting high into the air, and lighting up mountain and sky with a bright and steady blaze, while Nannie is running and dancing around it, and laughing triumphantly, and clapping her little hands, as if to encourage it. Nannie was no historian, or she would have known that she was not the first of her sex to set fire to a church for the sake of her lover. And not only was she no historian, but she did not know that her feelings for Criss partook in any way of the character of love.

A voice, and a rush! "He comes! oh, he comes!"

And Nannie looked round in the direction of the sound.

Alas! no Criss, no lover; though needed more than ever as a deliverer now. Needed far more, even, than when on the brink of the burning ship she stood ready to plunge into the ocean. For the creatures that meet her gaze are hideous savages, grinning and glaring upon her, as half-mad with drink and brutal passion they advance, three in number, towards her, with outstretched arms and fiendish yells.

They are negroes, who have taken advantage of the disturbances to plunder, and retired to the mountain to carouse unmolested, and who have been attracted to the summit by the unusual sight of the fire.

Shrieking loudly, Nannie darted from them, passing the burning hut so closely that the flames scorched her. Terror stricken and fleet of foot, she would probably have escaped, but the dense thicket brought her up, and she could not get away from the light of the fire.

They were closing in upon her, as she still flew and screamed, when, to their amazement they found themselves confronted by another whom they had not seen before, and who now darted between them and their prey, with imperious language and gestures, bidding them to forbear, on pain of instant destruction.

The wretches were too infuriated to heed the speaker. Two of them turned on him, while the other continued the pursuit of Nannie, now too exhausted to fly further. Extreme measures were absolutely necessary. What matter whether anthropoid apes, or pithecoid men? Had it not lately been declared, and by one entitled to authority in that country, that those who behave like wild beasts—to say nothing of their looking so much like them—must be treated as such?

A couple of shots in rapid succession laid two of the assailants on the ground. In another moment, the third had shared their fate; and Nannie, glancing round at the sound, recognized her deliverer, and, with a scream of joy, fell fainting on the ground.

CHAPTER VIII.

Criss ran towards the fallen figure of her whom he had a second time rescued; but finding his efforts to restore her to consciousness vain, he hastened to his car, which he had left close at hand, and presently returning with a cordial was more successful in winning her back to life. When she opened her eyes, he addressed her in Arabic, and was surprised to receive only a vacant stare in return.

Supposing that she was still under the influence of her recent swoon, he proceeded to pour more of his reviving liquid on her brow and hands. But she impatiently repelled the attention, and said sharply,

"Why do you talk to me in a language I don't understand? Are you not Mr. Carol?"

"Certainly, that is my name; but——"

"But you don't know me," she interrupted, "and you thought it was some other girl you were saving?" And in the access of her momentary jealousy, she energetically repulsed him.

Then, softening,

"I did it all to please you," she exclaimed, and burst into tears.

"What! can it be Nannie!" he cried; "my pretty little friend Nannie! alone, up here, and in this plight!"

"Of course it is. Why, who else did you think it could be?"

And then, glancing at her hands and clothes, which were all torn and soiled, she said,

"Well, I do look like a beggar girl; but, oh! I am so sore all over, with my tumbles, and the thorns, and running away from those nasty negroes. I am sure I must have some dreadful wounds somewhere," and lifting her dress, she revealed some ugly cuts above the ankles, from which the blood was flowing. This alarmed her, and exclaiming,

"Oh, I can't bear the sight of blood," she swooned away again.

Criss was somewhat embarrassed. He could not leave her there and thus. And he was most anxious to set about fulfilling his mission. Besides, as a young man, and one who was not a doctor, he was naturally shy about investigating the bodily state of one of the other sex.

Nannie, however, gave him little leisure for indulging his embarrassment. Starting to her senses again, she cried,

"Why don't you stop the bleeding? Surely a man is not afraid of the sight of blood. Have you nothing that will do

for a bandage? Here, wrap this round. It will do till something better can be got."

And she tore off some strips from her tattered skirt, and gave them to him.

Setting to work as directed, Criss did not fail to derive considerable relief from her manifest unconsciousness of the peculiarity of the situation, and was glad to accept her rebukes for his clumsiness in proof of that unconsciousness.

"I am so hungry," said Nannie, whimpering once more.

"That is soon remedied," replied Criss. "But you must get into your old place in the Ariel's car, and then you can feed, and sleep too, as we go along."

"Why, where are you going to take me?"

"Well, you see, we are not the only people in the world to be thought of," he returned. "Now just tell me exactly how matters stand at the settlement?"

"Oh, such fun!" she cried, clapping her hands; "there's not a human creature there; and I have set all the doors and gates open, and let all the cats and dogs, and cows and poultry, and other tame beasts loose, to go where they like, and broken the telegraph things, and——"

He succeeded at length in learning from her the whole situation, so far as she knew it. He then told her that he had passed the troops on their way, and that he must at once return to the capital to see if he could do anything to arrest their progress.

"Then what are you going to do with me?"

"Under all circumstances," he returned, "I think it best to take you with me to the capital, and perhaps deposit you with a doctor to be properly attended to while I am busy."

"You seem very anxious to get rid of me," she said, with a pout. "I hate doctors, and don't want to be left by myself in the city, with strangers. Besides, I am quite well now, or shall be when I have had something to eat."

"Well, get into the car at once," said Criss, "and we will settle the rest as we go along." And he helped her to get up, and move towards the Ariel; but she was so stiff and exhausted that he had almost to carry her and lift her in.

The couple of hundred miles which separate the mountain from the city, were soon spanned; but not before Nannie, who had eaten a hearty meal, was fast asleep. Criss had been amused to find that on catching sight of herself in a little mirror which was in the car, for the fire still burnt brightly, she insisted on washing her face and arranging her disordered hair before touching a particle of food. With a light wrapper of Criss's thrown over her head and shoulders, she really looked as charming once more, Criss thought, as it was possible for any one to look, even under the most favorable circumstances.

Approaching the capital, Criss arrested his flight, intending to hover around it until the arrival of daylight should make it possible for him to hold communication with the authorities.

To his great satisfaction, his passenger continued to sleep soundly.

CHAPTER IX.

Avenil knew that Criss would not have dispatched such a message to him as that which he received from Jerusalem, had there not been a good cause for urgency. Losing no time in communicating with the Confederate Council, he found that orders had already been issued, in answer to the appeal of the white settlers in Bornou, to despatch an aërial force to their aid. But, as Criss's message suggested to Avenil, the mischief might be done before that force could arrive. He therefore represented to the Council the propriety of telegraphing to the leaders of the revolution in the African capital, the strongest assurances of condign punishment should any harm befall the European population; stating at the same time that the message would be immediately followed by a force capable of utterly destroying the city by raining explosives and inextinguishable fire upon it.

Criss did not pause to hover around the capital as he had in-

tended. For, although it was not yet light, he found the whole population on the alert, and the leaders in full conclave. Uncertain of their temper, he hesitated about alighting to seek a doctor for Nannie. Besides, her sound continued sleep assured him that, under the care of nature, she was doing well.

He had intended to plead with the insurgent chiefs the cause of the fugitive prince and the settlers, by assuring them of vast rewards if they would reinstate the former, and of the severest punishment if they injured the latter. And he was prepared to work upon the popular superstitiousness by announcing the safety of the sacred gems of the crown, and to offer himself as a guarantee that they and the prince should be forthcoming at a fitting time. But for the present he would defer seeking the necessary interview.

Finding the city awake and abroad as if it had been up and out all night, he contented himself in the first instance with descending low enough to catch the meaning of the cries and conversations which were going on in the streets. He could do this without himself being seen, as, though the city below was lighted, the air above was still dark. Yet he observed numberless faces constantly upturned towards the still darkened sky, as if in expectation of a visit from that region : but it was some time before he could string together the sentences he caught, so as to gather from them a connected meaning.

At length when dawn was so near that he thought of retreating, he discovered the cause of the general anxiety. A message had arrived in the night from the Council of European Nations, declaring in the most positive terms that the city should be razed to the ground, and utter destruction dealt on the people, if any injury was done to a single European in the country ; and that an aërial expedition was already on its way, with strict instructions and ample means relentlessly to execute the vengeance denounced.

This was such a practical method of dealing, that Criss was strongly disposed to see Avenil's hand in it, and he congratulated himself on his forethought in telegraphing to him from Jerusalem.

Having thus obtained a key, he soon succeeded in unlocking the mystery. The news of the threatened vengeance had got abroad, and the whole population had assembled to insist on the Government instantly countermanding the movement of the troops dispatched against the settlers; and such was the alarm lest the Confederate Squadron should arrive and commence the work of destruction, that even after they knew the expedition had been recalled, they remained all night in the streets watching the northern sky for the first glimpse of the expected foe. Such was the estimation, justly earned, in which the Council of the Confederated Nations was held.

The circumstance of the Central Military Depot of the Federal Aërial Forces being in England, served to save time. It was the stability of the English character and institutions, added to the insularity of the country's position, that had led to the other nations fixing on England as the best depository for such a charge.

Assured now that a stranger had nothing to fear, but rather the contrary, from the populace, Criss had no longer a motive for concealment. He determined, however, to reveal himself in such a way as to impress them with a sense of the importance and authority of his mission.

So, making a considerable detour to the north, and ascending high into the air, he rapidly returned in a direct line towards the city, dropping from his car as he flew, signal bombs, which exploded in the air. He was gratified by the result of this scheme in two ways. First, the explosions attracted the attention of the populace, eliciting from them loud cries of terror, and from the authorities signals in reply. And, secondly, they did not awake Nannie.

It was daylight now, when, beheld by myriads of upturned eyes, Criss's car rushed through the air, and alighted upon the flat roof of the lofty building which he had before ascertained to be the headquarters of the authorities.

Surprise took the place of fear when it was seen that this little car was alone, and that it contained, apparently, but a solitary individual.

Addressing the people through his speaking-trumpet, Criss desired the principal persons in authority to show themselves on the terrace of the building below, in order that he might hold an interview with them.

These presented themselves, and respectfully enquired of Criss whether he was connected with the threatened expedition of the European Confederacy.

Criss replied in the affirmative, and added that it was not very far behind him. The object of his presence thus early was to obtain in advance of its arrival positive information respecting the situation, especially as it affected the foreigners, and to report to it accordingly. Nothing but the safety of the whites would ensure their own. What had they done towards this end?

They assured him by their chief spokesman that the troops which had been despatched to the mountains over night would be met on their arrival by positive orders to abandon the enterprise, and return to the capital.

"Can you depend upon their obeying you?" he asked.

It was clear to Criss that this was a perplexing question, and that the revolutionary government placed very little reliance on the fidelity of the troops in the event of their desire for violence and plunder being thwarted.

"The Federal squadron," he said, "will certainly not return home without inflicting punishment, unless they have positive proof that their countrymen are unharmed. It is a part of my duty to proceed to the settlements, and ascertain their condition for myself. When I have actually seen the troops embarked on their way back, I will return and communicate the intelligence to the Federal commanders, whom I shall then doubtless find here. In the meantime you will do well to consider what further steps are practicable for compelling the instant return of the troops."

After a brief and excited colloquy, the chiefs again addressed him saying:

"We thank you for the suggestion. We have decided to place the wives and families of the entire force under immedi-

ate arrest, and telegraph to the troops that on their failure to obey us, we shall massacre the whole of their families."

Feeling sure that such a necessity would not arise, Criss could not help smiling inwardly at the vigor of the resolution, and the testimony it bore to the wholesome respect for European civilization felt by these people. He thought of Avenil's doctrine of the physical basis of virtue.

"So far, well," he replied, "but I must proceed thither nevertheless. There is one other point in which I have first to confer with you. This time I speak, not as connected with the Federal Council, but as agent of the fugitive Prince of Abyssinia, your legitimate sovereign, now that his father, the late Emperor, is dead."

Was it certain that he was dead? they asked eagerly.

"Certain. I was with him when dying, and received his dying injunctions."

They announced to the multitude, who stood watching the conference with vast interest, that Theodoros was really dead; and a great shout immediately arose, which appeared to Criss to be one of satisfaction.

Was it the Emperor personally, the dynasty, or the form of government, that was obnoxious to them? he asked.

This question excited an indescribable commotion. It seemed to Criss as if everybody was shouting at once, and shouting conflicting answers. Among the replies he caught one to the effect that they had nothing against the young Prince; and another, that they would acknowledge no dynasty which did not possess the Talisman of Solomon.

On the hubbub subsiding, the chiefs asked Criss why he should interest himself in their form of government.

"In this matter," he replied, "I act as one who wishes to serve you, the Prince, and all people; and also as one who has both the power to restore the Prince and the sacred gems, and the will to assist him, if he be restored, in making this one of the happiest countries of the earth,—even to the turning of the Sahara into a garden," he added, using their favorite hyperbole.

It seemed to him that at this moment they must have obtained a better view of him than during the previous part of the conversation, or had come to take a greater interest in his person; for, as by one consent, all eyes had commenced intently to scrutinize him, as he stood erect in his car, with one hand holding one of the Ariel's side rods, and his speaking-trumpet in the other.

The scrutiny continued for some moments in silence, Criss, on his part, composedly confronting the crowd, and waiting for a reply.

Then as from one huge throat arose the shout:

"It is the Prince! It is the Prince himself!"

Criss had not thought of the resemblance, and the effect it was likely to produce if observed. Should he utilize the mistake, or undeceive them? To attempt the latter, he at once perceived would be unavailing. What would his word be against the unanimous testimony of their own eyesight? He must therefore utilize the mistake. But before he had time to speak, they cried:

"Come back, oh Prince, come back to us; come back with the Sacred Talisman of thy ancestors, and we will receive thee gladly. But without that no king reigns in Soudan."

"Answer me this, then, before I go forward on the mission that is to save your homes from destruction. Do you pledge yourselves to receive back your Prince, and to remain faithful to him, whenever he shall present himself with the sacred talisman?"

The crowd and the chiefs were by this time become as one body. Criss addressed himself alike to all, and all joined in the replies.

"Yes! yes! they cried; "but where is it now?"

"It is safe, in England."

"England! The land that made us Christians! We admire and respect England, though it afterwards abandoned the faith it had given to us."

"Christians indeed," thought Criss, with an inward sigh, as he remembered how, in close imitation of the long dark ages of

Christendom, the country had fostered under that sacred name some of the most degrading superstitions. He thought, too, how natural it seemed to be for those who remained in the rudiments of things, to regard as apostates and unbelievers those who proceeded to higher developments.

"England!" they shouted again. "If we restore you to the throne, will you get England to help us to shake off the yoke of the Jews?"

"You may be assured that all this, and much more, will be as you wish, if only you act like an enlightened and civilized people," returned Criss. "For my part I pledge myself to do my utmost to fulfil your righteous desires. For the present I go to the mountains to see that the land of Soudan does not incur the shame of maltreating strangers to whom its hospitality has been pledged."

At the moment of departing he paused once more, and writing something on a tablet, he threw it down to the chiefs, desiring them to give it to the commander of the Federal squadron on his arrival. Beside a message to that officer, it contained also a message for Bertie, in case he should have accompanied the expedition, an event which his knowledge of Avenil caused him to regard as more than probable; and which his scheme for solving the problem of the situation rendered almost indispensable.

He was anxious to start without further delay, for he heard Nannie moving in the car as if awake, and he was exceedingly averse to her being discovered there.

"Have I been good?" she asked, when they were once more aloft, and on their way back to the settlement. "I did so want to pop my head out while you were talking with those people; but I did not know whether you would like me to be seen."

"You have been the very best of girls," said Criss. "Under the circumstances, it would have been exceedingly inconvenient for you to be seen. I am glad to find you have so much self-control."

"Oh, I haven't a bit of that," she returned; "but I thought you would approve of my keeping still. What would they have done had they caught sight of me?"

"That I cannot exactly say; but it might have interfered with some very important plans which I have."

"You are very young to have anything so important to do."

"Circumstances sometimes force things upon one," answered Criss. "Did you ever happen to see the late Emperor or his son?"

"No, never; but I have heard that the Prince is very good looking. And I hope he is, for I cannot imagine a Prince being ugly."

"Well, they want the Prince to come back and be Emperor; and I promised to let him know, and perhaps help to bring him."

"Why, where is he?"

"I left him yesterday at Jerusalem."

"So you will be going away again," she said, pouting.

"Certainly. I am but a chance visitor to these regions. My home, you know, is in England."

"I'll never be good again," said Nannie, resolutely, after a short pause, and looking very miserable.

"Surely that is a rasher vow than you will find it in your mind to keep."

"Oh, you don't know how bad I can be," she answered. "I have the evilest mind, but I don't think my heart is bad. But I never get anything nice by being good; at least, since grandmother died."

"And how did she reward you?"

"She always kissed me. I have had no one to kiss me since. I would have done anything for her, darling granny. She took all the care that was taken of me after my mother's death. I believe my father hated her only because I was fond of her. He never kissed me in his life, that I can remember."

"It's a pity that I am not your grandmother, Nannie, for then I could have rewarded you as she used to."

"You did kiss me once, you know. But I did'nt like it."

"Indeed! I am sorry for that. You must ascribe my unskilfulness to want of practice."

"It isn't practice that's needed," she said, shortly.

"No? What then?"

"Affection. You didn't care for me enough to kiss me in the right place. People who care don't kiss on the forehead," she added, pouting.

"Well, Nannie, I must say that when you put out your lips like that, they do look very much as if they were made for kissing."

"Of course they were," she said. "Only you expect me to be good without rewarding me when I am."

"Well, Nannie; if a kiss from me, in the right place, be any reward, I am sure you are welcome to so slight a gift."

"Hear the boy!" she exclaimed. "He calls 'a slight gift' what Mattie declares any other man would give his eyes for," and she put her face, covered with an arch smile, close to his—for they were in the same compartment of the car—and pouting like a petulant bewitching child, said,—

"Give it to me, then."

When they had exchanged kisses, Nannie was quiet and content, merely remarking demurely,—

"I suppose I ought to say 'thank you,' for I am evidently the one favored." And again, after a pause, as if speaking to herself,—

"I do believe he gave it to me because he thought I wanted it, and not because he wanted it himself."

But for Criss, unacquainted as he was with the magnetic phenomena of the lips, a new order of things seemed to have commenced in the universe. He felt his whole nature for the moment possessed by some novel and powerful sorcery, and scarce knew whether to regard Nannie as woman, child, or witch. Anyhow, he felt convinced that no other pair of lips in the world could have such a power.

It required a much more practised faculty of discernment in such matters than Criss had, to see that, while on one side of Nannie's nature she was as a child starving for an endearing caress, on the other side she was a very woman in her consciousness of the irresistible might of her charms.

CHAPTER X.

It has already been related how Criss visited the troops encamped at the foot of Atlantika, and after a lengthened colloquy ascended to the settlers who were posted on the hill.

His arrival from the capital occurred at a fortunate moment, for the troops were almost in open mutiny against their officers, and disposed to attack the whites, or at least plunder the settlement, in spite of the urgent dispatches received from the city, and the positive orders of their commanders. These latter knew enough of the Federal Council and the resources at its disposal, to fear the worst in the event of its menaces being disregarded. With the ignorant soldiery it was different, and the arrival of the dispatch from the authorities in Bornou declaring that in the event of their orders being disobeyed they would massacre every woman and child belonging to the force, proved a most useful stimulus to their submission.

In this mood, while sullen with disappointment, and angry with the revolutionary leaders, Criss's arrival proved a welcome diversion. It served to give reality to the news from the capital, and reconcile the troops to their own forbearance. Throughout his journey he had been possessed by one apprehension. He feared that the authorities might anticipate his arrival at the camp, by a telegram announcing him as the prince, and notifying their readiness to receive him as Emperor, now that Theodoros was dead. That they had not done so was due only to their distrust of the temper of the troops. The intelligence of the counter-revolution might exasperate them into committing the violence now so much deprecated.

So Criss himself was the bearer of the news that the aërial squadrons of the Confederate Nations of Europe were hourly expected at the capital; that the Emperor was dead, and the whole people ready to welcome the prince, who, on his part, was prepared to rule in accordance with their wishes. The one thing necessary now was that he should be enabled to return

almost immediately to the city, and inform the Federal commanders that he had himself seen that the whites were unmolested, and the troops actually in the trains, and on their return home. As for their present disappointment, they ought to be thankful at having escaped the disgrace of violating the laws of hospitality in regard to the white settlers; and, for the future, let them only prove faithful to their new engagements, and a compensation would not be lacking under the restored regime.

Criss committed Nannie to the charge of her relatives on the hill, telling them that she had been injured by a fall, and required attention. Nannie herself was too disconcerted by the necessity for Criss's speedy departure to say much about herself. Indeed, if the full truth were to be told, it would have to be admitted that for several hours she was much too cross to open her mouth.

Criss gave the settlers a sketch of the position of affairs, and as soon as he had seen the last train moving off with the troops, started on his way back to the capital, having promised Nannie to return before long, and enquire after her wounds.

It was with considerable anxiety that Criss once more approached the city. Knowing how shallow and fickle are all uncultivated peoples, especially those reared under the tropics, he feared that the resolution of the Bornouse would not long hold, excepting under the pressure of a palpable object of dread. It was mainly to the expected arrival of the Federal squadron that the recent conversion had been due. Should any chance occur to delay its coming until after the return of the troops from the hills, it was impossible to say what revulsion of sentiment might take place. At any rate, thought Criss, it would not do for him to show himself again until backed by the expected force. It was therefore with much anxiety that he kept his look-out as he approached the city.

The excitement in the Bornouse capital was intense, when at length the word was given that Something was visible in the northern horizon. Taking it for granted that such Something could only be the expected expedition, the whole population flocked to the roofs of their houses, and all the most elevated places, to witness the portentous advent.

They were not disappointed, either in the fact of the Something being the aërial fleet, or in the strangeness of the aspect it presented.

Swiftly and steadily the vessels came careering onwards, looming larger and larger as they approached, resembling, in their order and regularity, a flight of gigantic wild fowl; for now they would range themselves in long lines, wedge-shape, one behind the other; now expand into curves, and then stretch straight out into one long array, like an advancing line of battle; and finally, as they came up to the menaced capital, reversing the direction of their line, so as to arrive singly, one after the other, the car of the admiral in command having the lead.

Arrived directly over the city, they suddenly brought up, and remained nearly stationary. As they paused on high, keeping themselves, by a slight movement of their machinery, floating slowly about, now spread out over the whole area of the city, now collected into a compact mass, it might well have seemed to the myriads of the inhabitants, who, with upturned faces, were gazing from below, that they themselves were fishes at the bottom of the sea, and that this was a vast fleet of huge war ships, whose dark hulls lay floating on the surface.

It was indeed a far larger force than was necessary for the task of destroying a city. But the chance had been utilized as an occasion for practice; and in addition to the vessels of destruction, the Council had deemed it advisable to dispatch a large number of transports, in case it should prove necessary to remove the white settlers from the country.

So impressed was the multitude with the aspect of these mighty engines of war, lying so secure in their calm grandeur, far out of reach, that they remained hushed as in terrified expectation of the sudden descent of the shower of all-consuming fire with which they had been threatened.

The national flag, exhibited by being stretched horizontally above the Hall of Government, indicated to the aërial squadron the headquarters of the authorities. Presently a line was seen, with a dispatch attached to it, descending from the car of the

admiral, straight upon the Hall, where the chiefs were collected.

With eager anxiety, it was received and read.

Briefly stating the nature and object of the expedition, the message asked what plea the city could urge against being instantly destroyed.

A reply was returned, stating that no injury whatever had been, or would be done to the white settlers, and that the troops sent against them had been recalled, and were then on their way back. Moreover, that it had been determined to restore the Empire, by setting the Prince of Abyssinia on the throne, and that the prince had gone in person to assure himself of the safety of the foreigners, and was hourly expected to return to meet the chiefs of the Federal Expedition.

Together with this reply they sent up the note left by Criss.

"Bless the boy!" exclaimed Bertie to the admiral (for owing to Avenil's sagacious intervention, and powerful interest, Bertie was indeed there). "Bless the boy! what does it all mean? I know he left the prince at Jerusalem yesterday morning. Can they be trying to deceive us? Yet this is his writing, sure enough."

"Who is *he?*" asked the admiral.

"A difficult question to answer all at once," replied Bertie. "For the last twenty-one years *he* has occupied the position of ward to Lord Avenil and myself; and now having come to his fortune, he is looking for an investment for it."

"Large?" asked the admiral, who delighted in the laconic, and spoke as if his habit of navigating the air had made him short of wind: so reluctant is professional mannerism to yield to the advance of civilization.

"Millions," replied Bertie, unconsciously adopting the admiral's style; and in his desire to win credit for Criss, totally forgetting his pledge of secrecy.

"What has he to do with these people?"

"Has friends here, and came to save them."

"All by himself?" said the admiral, with an incredulous air.

"But for him we should probably have been too late."

"We should have taken ample revenge, though."

"So that he has saved the city as well as the settlers."

"Humph," said the admiral.

"Please, sir," said an officer, entering, "a visitor has called to see the officer commanding the expedition."

It was Criss, who, seeing the fleet resting over the city, had steered straight for the admiral's car. Having attached his own to it, he came on board.

"Mr. Carol, my late ward," said Bertie, introducing him.

"Glad to see you, sir," said the admiral. "Can you throw any light on this document? What do these people mean by *the prince?*"

"They mean me," said Criss, smiling; and he briefly related the circumstances under which the threatened outrage had been averted, and the dynasty restored.

"You have got yourself into a mess, young gentleman," said the Admiral, when he had concluded.

"Not a bit of it," said Bertie, somewhat brusquely, and to the admiral's surprise, for he was not used to being contradicted, least of all in his own fashion and on board his own vessel, and he did not like it. But Bertie, gentle and patient as he was, would not brook the least snub to Criss.

"How can anyone be in a mess," he asked, "when he can fly away to the ends of the earth, without a possibility of being tracked or overtaken."

"I see the difficulty plainly enough," said Criss; "but it is in your power, admiral, and Bertie's, if he will join, to set things all right."

"How so? I am not here to meddle with local politics," said the Admiral, who entertained considerable respect for Criss's millions. "I have nothing to do with restoring dynasties, or changing governments for the folks here. That is their own affair. But I must send an answer down. How do I know that the foreign residents are safe?"

"I have just left them returning to their homes untouched," replied Criss, "having first seen the troops in the trains, and on their way back."

"You have done excellently well," said the admiral; "but it will not do for me to go home and say that I have been *told* such and such things. I must report on my own authority."

"Then leave part of your force here; at least until the troops have returned, and go with another part to the hills, and visit the settlers yourself," suggested Criss.

"And how about the mock prince? Besides, I must exact guarantees for the future."

"Let us get the true prince over, and he will give them to you."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the admiral, unconsciously illustrating by his choice of an abjuration, the marvellous vitality of the ancient Pagan theism.

"But they suppose him to be already here," remarked Bertie; "and will probably be exasperated on discovering their mistake."

"Why need they discover it?" said Criss. "Admiral, what do you think of this plan? That you go and visit all the settlements, taking three or four days about it, and letting the authorities here suppose that the prince has accompanied you. And in the meantime Bertie and I will go to Jerusalem and fetch the prince, and put him on board of you, before he assumes the throne?"

"Humph," said the admiral; and taking a tablet he wrote upon it, and showed them what he proposed to send down. It was to the effect that he should leave part of his force to threaten the city, and send part to the settlements to inspect the condition of the foreigners. On its return they would be at liberty to reconstruct the government. In the meantime a telegraph to Europe must be placed at the service of the expedition, for which purpose he would let down a connecting wire, and mooring tackle.

"Expedition arrived off Bornou. All well. Settlers reported safe." This was the first message sent to relieve anxiety in Europe.

While the admiral was superintending the execution of these

details, Criss and Bertie conversed together. The matter was one of which they seemed unable to make up their minds; for, addressing the admiral, Bertie said,—

"Admiral, we want your advice, not professionally, but as a man of practical knowledge and wisdom. You may, or may not know, that in this country the prestige of the crown has long been bound up with its possession of a certain heir-loom, called the *Talisman of Solomon.* It consists of an exceedingly magnificent set of diamonds and other gems—crown jewels, in fact, of the ancient empire of Abyssinia,—whose royal family, as you doubtless know, claim direct descent from Solomon,—and now of the united empires of Abyssinia and Soudan. I cannot, perhaps, better illustrate the transcendent importance attached in this country to the possession of this talisman, than by comparing it to the place formerly occupied in any country by the sacred books of its religion; as, for instance, in our own land, prior to the Emancipation, by the Bible. We now hold the Bible to be of such high intrinsic value as to be incapable of gaining in prestige by being converted into a Fetich. It is the same with these jewels, only the people here are still ignorant and superstitious, and so think more of traditions and sorceries than of any intrinsic worth and beauty.

"Well, the Talisman of Solomon has been believed to be lost. The prince himself supposes it lost, and mistrusts the stability of his throne for want of it. Thus he may, when it comes to the point, hesitate to trust himself back in the country. My young friend here, however, has pledged himself to the people to bring back not only the prince, but also the crown jewels, provided the dynasty be restored. We have agreed to go and fetch the prince at once. What do you think about the jewels? Is it better that they come with the prince, or after a certain period; and then on condition of the continued good conduct both of people and Emperor."

Criss could not help smiling at this very elliptical statement. He was not sure whether it was by accident or design that Bertie had made the omission which rendered it utterly unintelligible.

"It strikes me you are in a second scrape, young sir," said

the Admiral to Criss. "It is a pity they are lost, for one great blow is worth any number of successive taps. The prince's return with the talisman they think so much of, would produce far greater effect than any subsequent proceedings. There is nothing for it, that I can see, but to postpone the diamonds until paste ones can be made."

This ingenious solution of the supposed difficulty drew hearty laughter from both Criss and Bertie. The Admiral looking surprised, Bertie hastened to explain.

"We are laughing, Admiral, at my stupidity in omitting to mention that, so far from being really lost, the jewels in question are safe in England, and actually in possession of my young friend here. How they came so is too long a story to be told now. No, the question is, whether we shall let them remain there for the present, or telegraph for them to be sent to meet us and the prince at Jerusalem, and then bring them on with us."

The Admiral was too stupefied with astonishment to be able to make a suggestion. The point was finally settled by Criss's remarking,—

"I am thinking that I ought to have some guarantee for the good conduct of the prince, as well as you for that of the people. So I have made up my mind to retain possession of the jewels for the present, and make their return conditional. I shall fix his coronation for the anniversary of his accession, and if I am satisfied with him, let him wear them for the first time on that occasion."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Admiral; "I remember reading the Arabian Nights in my youth; but I do not remember that the Genii who played with kingdoms ever took the form of a young man of twenty-one. Supposing, however, that I am not in an Arabian Night at this moment, and that everything about me is real and genuine, I can only say that the last notion strikes me as an exceedingly sensible one. When one has a hold on great people, as you seem to have on this prince, it is well to keep it. That settled, there is no longer any cause for delaying your start. I presume you feel confident he will

consent to return with you? If he does not, you must lose no time in telegraphing the fact to me, that the return of the fleet be not needlessly delayed."

"What do you think," asked Bertie, "of lending us an escort, Admiral?"

"Impossible, without leave from home; and Jerusalem is about the last place with which the Council would run the risk of having a misunderstanding. Besides, you must not lose time; and my heavily armed craft do not sacrifice everything to speed. I shall not, however, hesitate to take upon myself the responsibility of granting you, Mr. Greathead, the leave of absence needful to enable you to quit the fleet. And when the prince returns, with the approbation of the country, I shall be happy to join in any demonstration that may both serve as a compliment and mark the termination of a successful mission."

So Criss and Bertie set off, Criss in his favorite Ariel, and Bertie in his more capacious vessel, for Jerusalem, Bertie being furnished with a formal document, granting him leave of absence from the expedition for one week in the interest of the foreign settlers in Soudan.

CHAPTER XI.

The Prince desired, before returning to occupy the throne of his ancestors, to fulfil an appointment he had made with the Soudan Bondholders' Committee of the puissant Stock Exchange of Jerusalem. Between the fears entertained by these of a total repudiation of the debt, and the desires of his countrymen to be relieved of the burden of its interest, he hoped to effect a compromise agreeable to both parties.

Criss readily agreed to the delay of a day, or even two, before returning, as he was anxious to visit Damascus and the Lebanon in order to ascertain some particulars about his family. Bertie accompanied him on this quest, but before quitting Jeru-

salem, they consulted a solicitor respecting the laws of inheritance and abandoned property.

The solicitor perfectly remembered the fact of the disappearance of the old merchant and his family from the country, and said that the property thus left without a claimant would remain in the custody of the local authorities for twenty-one years, at the expiration of which it would be sold, and the proceeds applied to the public use. These, however, were liable to be reclaimed by the natural heirs at any time during a further period of twenty-one years.

"The twenty-one years," he said, referring to a register, "since the disappearance of which you refer took place, have quite recently expired. You will probably find, therefore, that the houses in question are at this moment being inspected and cleared, in order to be taken possession of by some incoming purchaser. Property in this country is too valuable to be long left idle."

It was not without considerable emotion that Criss found himself at length about to visit the home of his mother. Of her unhappy fate there was no room for doubt. But he did not know whether his father was living. If he were, Criss thought, surely he would put in a claim for the property of his wife's father. If he had not done so, surely the fact might be accepted as an assurance of his death.

On enquiring in the proper quarter, Criss found that shortly after the disappearance an attempt had been made to obtain possession of the property in question. It had been done through an agent, who had kept the name of his principal a profound secret. The attempt had failed, owing, it was supposed, to the inability of the applicant to prove himself legally entitled to the succession, for the claim had never been renewed.

The story told by Bertie before the local court in Damascus created extraordinary interest. Many of the older members declared that they perceived a strong resemblance between the young man and the members of the lost family. The case could not be finally decided at once, but in consideration

of all the circumstances, and upon securities being given for the restitution of the property in the event of the claim being ultimately disallowed, Criss was permitted to take possession of all documents and other movables found in the houses.

These articles, therefore, were put into the train (for this excursion had been made by railroad), and taken to the hotel in Jerusalem, where Criss and Bertie spent a great part of the night in examining and deciphering their contents.

The result of the interview between the Committee and the Prince had been unsatisfactory, owing to the inability of the latter to give any confirmation of the intelligence upon which he had relied to influence their decision. The telegraph between Bornou and Jerusalem had been stopped by the revolutionary chiefs, and the Jews knew that such a result as the restoration of the Empire did not come within the scope of the Federal Expedition. In common with the rest of the world, they had learnt the news of the safety of the settlers. But the Prince did not deem himself justified in revealing at present the grounds of his expectation of a speedy and happy restoration.

He himself, in relating all this to his two friends, ascribed much of his difficulty with the Board to the hostility of one of its members, who seemed to have a personal feeling against him and his cause. This was the President, a man of vast repute for commercial sagacity, not famous for scrupulousness, and believed to be mainly of Greek origin, though naturalized as a citizen of Jerusalem.

In answer to a taunt from this personage, the Prince had requested an adjournment of the Conference, until the following afternoon, in order that he might consult with his friends as to the expediency of placing the Committee in possession of further information.

The result of the previous day's conference had been to excite immense interest respecting the affairs of Soudan. The confident tone and bearing of the fugitive Prince had produced a profound impression on the Board, although its members had

studiously concealed the feeling from him. His positive assertions that his father was dead; that the throne was awaiting his acceptance; and that the indispensable Talisman had survived one more startling chance, and would be forthcoming on his coronation, had excited the curiosity of the millionaires of Jerusalem to the highest pitch; and it needed only the notification which the Prince sent them after again seeing Criss and Bertie, that he would produce his authorities, to fill the Great Salon in the Hall of Commerce with an attendance unprecedented.

The question for the money-kings of Israel, whose fortunes were to a great extent involved in the stability of Soudan, was whether the Prince should be regarded as virtually Emperor, and entitled to their highest consideration, or whether he should be regarded as a penniless fugitive, and the dupe of unprincipled adventurers.

The Stock Exchange of Jerusalem—a new and magnificent building—stands upon the site once occupied by the famous Temple of Solomon, and subsequently by the Mosque of Omar. The arrangements of the salon are such as to give it the aspect of a court for state trials. The place assigned to the Appellant, as persons holding the Prince's relation to the Committee are styled, is a small, isolated stage, situated opposite the centre of a vast semi-circular platform, but at a somewhat lower level.

On this platform sat the Committee and a large assemblage of the principal members of the Stock Exchange, the heads of all the great mercantile houses, and the governing chiefs of the Jewish people. It was an assembly representative of the world's wealth of accumulated industry and realized property; an assembly transcending in mere money-power that of any government on the face of the earth.

The meeting was only so far not public, in that the reporters of the press were not admitted in their recognized capacity. But that the press did not lack competent representatives on this occasion may be seen by the report of the conference contained in the following chapter, which appeared the same evening in a special late edition of the *Zion Herald.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE REVOLUTION IN SOUDAN.

ALLEGED COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

IS IT A SHAM?

THE PRINCE AND THE COMMITTEE.

A BRITISH MILLIONAIRE-AERIALIST IN THE SCRAPE.

STRANGE, IF TRUE!

STRANGER, IF FALSE!

WHO SHALL BE KING?

Zion Herald Office, 10 P. M.

We doubt whether, since the days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian emissary Rabshekah held his memorable interview with "the men that sat on the wall," Jerusalem has witnessed a more remarkable meeting than that which took place this afternoon in the Hall of Commerce. Certainly the only event of modern times which can parallel it in interest is that of the restoration itself. We have kept our readers so well posted in the affairs of Central Africa, that we need not waste their time and ours in recapitulating the situation of which to-day's occurences are the climax.

It will be remembered that on the breaking out of the revolt, the Emperor Theodoros disappeared, together—in point of time, at least—with the crown jewels, which are reckoned the palladium of the country; and that his son and heir, the Imperial Prince of Abyssinia, took refuge in this city. Our report of yesterday's meeting of the Soudan Bondholders' Committee, conveyed to our readers the startling change in the demeanor of the Prince, who, for reasons entirely unknown to them, had suddenly exchanged his *rôle* of suppliant for that of dictator.

The meeting was scarcely less remarkable for the number and standing of the persons who attended it, than for the singularity of the events which it witnessed. Among those present were the heads of all our great mercantile and banking houses, numerous members of the Sanhedrim, including the venerable chief of that august body, the representatives of the allied provinces of Persia, Arabia, and the Euphrates, and nearly all the foreign ministers accredited to the Jewish Government. The predominant expectation was that the Prince would fail utterly to show ground for the new position he had taken up, and the betting was accordingly against him.

On entering the salon, which was already crowded, we found the Prince with two other foreign gentlemen, one somewhat past middle age, the other considerably younger, sitting in the appellant's box, awaiting the commencement of the interpellations. These began by the president of the committee, who is also president of the Stock Exchange, addressing the Prince, saying that the Board readily acknowledged his status as heir to the throne of Soudan, and sympathized in his misfortunes; but that before admitting his right to represent that country by entering into business relations with its creditors, they must have sufficient ground for believing, first, that the Emperor, his father, was dead; and, secondly, that the country acknowledged him as successor to the crown.

Here the Prince rose and, bowing with dignity, replied that he was now prepared to afford the Court the same information that he himself possessed. He would first, therefore, present to them his friend Mr. Carol, of London, and request him to state what he knew of the Emperor's death.

The young man whom we have mentioned as sitting beside the Prince, then rose, and stated that he was ready to answer any questions affecting the matter before the Court, but should reserve to himself the right to be silent respecting matters which were private to himself—a reservation at which the President very visibly arched his eyebrows; while the Prince himself appeared somewhat surprised, not to say disconcerted. The elder stranger, however, unmistakably betrayed his amuse-

ment by a smile, and a glance at his companion, which was easily interpretable as signifying, "Well, you are a cool hand, young sir." As the sequel proved, the occurrence formed no exception to the maxim contained in our Jerusalem Normal-school copybooks, that,—

"It is easy to be self-possessed in the presence of millionaires, *when one happens to be a millionaire oneself.*"

"We will endeavor to respect the reservation," said the President, with the formal courtesy of the man of the world who knows the value of such a demeanor. "The Prince has described you as his friend. We will not, for the present at least, dispute the satisfactoriness of his voucher. Pray, then, be so good as to state the circumstances which are within your own knowledge respecting the death of the late Emperor of Soudan."

The young man then proceeded to narrate, in a manner so simple and voice so touching as to win all hearts, how that about the middle of last month, while returning from a visit in Central Africa to keep his birthday with his friends in England, and travelling as he was accustomed, by himself, in an aërial car, he passed over the Bornouse capital while the insurrection was in full progress and the royal palace in flames. That continuing his way without touching ground, he chanced, while traversing the Sahara at a very low altitude, to hear a sound as of some one in pain; and on alighting, found a disabled flying machine of old-fashioned construction, whose sole occupant was a wounded man. That he carried with him to Algiers this man, who must otherwise have perished in the desert, and deposited him with a surgeon, and would have remained by him to the last had not his duties required his presence in England. He had, therefore, after remaining in Algiers a couple of days, committed him specially to the care of the British Minister, intending to return to Algiers with all speed. That this intention was frustrated, as on Christmas-eve a special messenger came from the Minister, stating that the man he had rescued from the desert had died of his wounds, and bearing a packet with a written communication, which

made it absolutely certain that he who had been thus picked up, was no other than the unfortunate Emperor of Central Africa.

This statement was received with profound astonishment by the Court; but, what seemed most curious, by no one was it received with such evident surprise as by the Prince himself. It was clear that even with him his friend had made certain "reservations," and that he was now for the first time learning the particulars of his father's death.

"May we be made acquainted more fully with the nature of the communication to which you refer?" asked the President.

"Its main purport," replied the young Englishman, "was to thank me for my services in his behalf, and to commend his son to my friendship. The original is in London in keeping of the lawyers of my guardian—Lord Avenil."

Here the elder stranger whispered something to the witness Carol, from which he seemed to dissent. He then said aloud to the Court,—

"The British Minister, who, I believe, is present, can state whether he has received from the Minister at Algiers the corroboration of my statement for which I requested him this morning to telegraph."

"It is true," said the British Minister, rising, and addressing the Court, "that a stranger of Central Africa, evidently a man of distinction, arrived badly hurt at Algiers at the time and in the manner we have heard related; but he made no revelation to the Minister concerning his name or quality. His sole confidences were given to this young gentleman, for whose genuineness and trustworthiness my colleague at Algiers energetically vouches."

Here the elder stranger rose, and said that he was present when the packet in question arrived, and was acquainted with its contents.

In answer to the Court's enquiry, this witness stated that his name is Greathead; that he is a professional aëronaut, officially attached to the aërial expedition of the Confederated Nations

to Central Africa, and at present absent on special leave to come to Jerusalem. He exhibited a document to that effect, dated three days ago, and bearing the signature and official seal of the admiral in command.

A glance of astonishment ran through the assembly on finding so stout a testimony to the accuracy of the prince's information, and finding it, too, in the person of an official of the expedition. The President alone seemed unmoved by it. In the same tone of cold, measured courtesy, which had marked his manner throughout, he said,—

"It seems strange to the Court that your services could be spared so soon after the expedition reached the scene of its intended operations."

"Not stranger to the Court than to myself," answered the aëronaut Greathead, in a loud, hearty, abrupt tone, which contrasted curiously with the keen inflection of the President's voice: "not stranger to the Court than to myself; but my dear boy here can tell you all about it, if he chooses. It is all owing to him that the revolution in Soudan is over, the white settlers safe, and the throne waiting to receive the new Emperor as soon as he will let us carry him back."

The President did not give the assembly time to indulge the surprise it felt at this speech, but addressing the last witness, said,—

"You are, perhaps, not acquainted with the superstitious character of the people of Soudan. But it is an undoubted fact that no sovereign has a chance of acceptance unless he be in tutelary possession of certain jewels, known as the Talisman of Solomon, from whom the royal family of the country claims descent——"

"And therefore I have promised," interrupted the younger Englishman, "that, on the occasion of his coronation,—which I have, in my own mind, fixed for the first anniversary of his accession,—the Sacred Talisman shall be forthcoming; that is, provided he proves by his conduct in the meantime—as I have no doubt he will do—that he is not unworthy of his high position."

And having said this, he turned and cast upon the prince a glance of such warm friendship, as only a long and intimate acquaintance would seem to account for.

This speech, so extraordinary for its apparent and manifold presumption, was uttered in a simple, eager manner, and without a particle of consciousness of its almost preternatural boldness, on the part of the speaker.

The prince himself was for several moments absolutely stupefied with surprise. Then starting to his feet he confronted the youth Carol, with an air that demanded an explanation as to who it was that thus constituted himself the arbiter of his destiny. But the young man merely said to him,—

"Not now, my dear Prince. You shall know all in good time."

The President overhearing his remark, himself addressed the witness, saying,—

"If we are to make the concessions desired, it is necessary that we be fully enlightened; and for that, it seems to the Court, no time can be so good as the present."

"You forget my reservation," answered Carol. "I especially exempted anything that touched upon my private affairs. All that I care to state now is, that the secret of the crown jewels and their whereabouts, has been committed to me, and that I shall reveal it at the fitting time."

They had been standing side by side since the prince had risen, and it now became evident from the whispering going on among the audience, that some startling suggestion was being discussed by them. The whispers became general, and then all eyes were turned upon the pair in intent scrutiny. Then the President, addressing the young Englishman, said,—

"Have you any objection to giving the court some particulars of your birth and parentage?"

"I cannot," he returned, "of my own knowledge, give the information you ask, though no doubt I was present on the occasion. But there is one here who is both able and free to relate what he knows about it." And he indicated the elder foreigner.

"Mr. Greathead," said the President, "will you have the kindness to give the Court any information you possess on this head? The birth, for instance, of Mr. Carol,—where did it take place?"

The witness stood erect, and assuming an air of the utmost gravity, pointed upwards, and said solemnly,—

"In heaven!"

"We are aware," said the President, "that you are an aëronaut. Did it take place in one of your own aëromotives?"

Everybody, probably, except himself, noticed that the President's voice had of late entirely lost its keenness of tone, and his manner its severity.

"It occurred thus," said the witness Greathead. "I, and some others, were stranded on an iceberg in the Arctic seas, when a balloon was blown to us,—a balloon of old-fashioned and foreign make,—a floating, rather than a flying machine. This child was in it, evidently only just born——"

"And the other occupants?"

"When the balloon reached us it had but one, an old man, an Asiatic, who expired shortly afterwards."

"But—but—you said the child was but just born. The old man could—could—could not have been its MOTHER! Where was SHE, then?"

The loud, eager, and excited way in which the President jerked out this extraordinary speech, his eyes almost starting from his head, and his forehead streaming with perspiration, attracted the observation of the whole assembly. On being further informed by Greathead that there was reason to suppose a woman had fallen out and been lost, very shortly before the balloon reached the iceberg, he seemed to be gathering up his whole strength to ask one more question.

"When,—when was this?"

"Christmas-day, twenty-one years ago."

At this, with a cry, the President dropped senseless into his chair.

Fortunately a medical man was present, and to him the patient was committed, while the people talked together in groups.

Some who knew the President intimately, said that it must be a heart complaint, to which he had been liable ever since a loss he had suffered many years ago. Presently it was announced that he was better, and refused to suspend the sitting for more than a few minutes, when he expected to be himself again.

At length the President announced the resumption of the sitting. He asked the full name of the young foreigner.

"Christmas Carol," was the reply.

"I knew it! I knew it! Mr. President," shouted a voice from the back part of the platform. And there could be seen struggling to the front the venerable figure of one of our most successful, and therefore deservedly respected, citizens, well-known in connection with the diamond trade.

"I knew it, Mr. President," he cried, "the moment I saw Mr. Greathead, the aëronaut. To my knowledge, those jewels were in his possession nearly twenty-one years ago, having been long previously spirited away from Bornou, and lost in the great volcano of the Pacific. I myself was the agent of their sale to the Court of Soudan, at the time of the late Emperor's coronation. I ask now by what devil's magic they have again come to light, and in the possession of this youth?"

"Do you dispute his right and title to them?" asked the President, with a curious smile.

"It is for me to do that, if anybody may," interposed the Prince.

"And do you dispute it?" asked the President, with some perplexing expression on his face.

"I am too much in the dark to affirm or dispute anything," he replied.

Here the young stranger rose, and said that he thought they were rather wandering from the main question. It was necessary for the Prince to start with himself and friend without delay, if he was to redeem the pledge which had been given on his behalf to the people of Bornou. It was important, moreover, that his return should have the benefit of the distinction which the presence and homage of the Federal expedition would

give it. He added that the circumstance that the people believed the Prince to be at that moment actually in the country, and living as a voluntary hostage with the commander of the expedition, made any delay most perilous to his chances. So that, whether the Committee acceded to his wishes or not, it was better for him to go at once than to wait.

This was a new complication, and after listening to some suggestions of his colleagues, the President, still with an undefinable expression, but with a manner full of suavity, enquired of Carol how the people of Bornou came to labor under such a delusion.

"In the conference which I held with them," replied the witness, "they took me for him, and insisted that I was the Prince."

The singularity of the President's reply to this answer, added to the peculiarity of his manner, produced at first the impression that his mind was still affected by his recent attack.

"It is clear, then," he said, "that you might return and personate the Prince, and occupy the throne as Emperor, without suspicion or risk. We can see for ourselves the resemblance of which you speak. It is as close as could well subsist even between nearly-related members of the same family. For my part, and I have every reason to feel secure of the assent of my colleagues, I am ready to grant the terms asked of us, provided you yourself occupy the throne of Soudan. You evidently have all the mental requisites for such a position, and the strange fatality which has once more put you in possession of the sacred gems, marks you out for the post whose previous occupants have been so ready to abandon it at the first sign of danger."

It was not the first time during this remarkable conference that the prevailing sentiment had been one of profound astonishment. But it was the first time that an expression of surprise had been suffered to invade the self-possession of the young Englishman. His voice, when at length he recovered himself sufficiently to speak, betrayed yet another feeling than that of surprise; for he spoke in tones of anger and indignation, demanding of the President.

"Do you, sir, when you counsel me to a course of treachery and dishonor, really know to whom you are speaking?"

"I know that you are worthy of a kingdom, both by merit and by station. Why refuse to be a king?"

The interest with which this strange colloquy was listened to, was of the most intense description. Even those who had deemed the President's mind affected, thought they now discerned a sound meaning beneath his words. Whatever their meaning was, they evidently did not strike the young Englishman as irrational or incoherent. Faintly and slowly, yet with intense distinctness, he at length said:

"No kingdom of this world possesses attractions for me. To no spot of earth do I care to be tied. My life and interest lie yonder," and he pointed upwards, in manifest allusion to his passion for atmospheric yachting. "Why tempt me thus?"

A haggard look came over the face of the President. He shook like one in a palsy, and his voice was harsh and hoarse as he essayed to reply. He commenced a sentence and then broke off, and commenced another of different purport. At length he said:

"Am I to understand that you finally and decidedly refuse to avail yourself of the chance I have put before you?"

Instead of answering this query, Carol turned to the Prince, who sat lost in amazement as to what it all could mean. The Prince rose at his look; when Carol, grasping one of his hands with one of his own, and throwing the other round his neck, cried:

"Fear not, my COUSIN! It is not I who will supplant you."

At this arose questionings as to who this could be that thus claimed close kindred with the best blood of Israel. It was while the two young men, looking so marvellously like each other that none could have told them apart, gazed into each other's faces—the Prince evidently bewildered, as at a revelation he could not all at once comprehend—that the President, demanding silence, said:

"Christmas Carol, now that you positively refuse to entertain my suggestion, I will answer your question why I tempted

you thus. It is because I am your father! And, being your father, partake the enmity which your mother's branch of the family bore to the branch reigning in Soudan. I have sworn that so long as that branch occupied the throne in which it supplanted ours, Israel should deal usuriously with its people. I would see my son Emperor—that son, who by belonging to the elder branch, is the true and rightful heir. Tell me, has my revelation taken you by surprise?"

"I knew all, save that you were my father."

"When did you obtain your information?"

"Last night, from the documents I found in my grandfather's houses in Damascus and the Lebanon. I learnt, too, what yonder diamond merchant will be interested in knowing, how the crown jewels were saved from the crater of Kilauea. The Californian sovereign carried them in a belt upon his person. His confidential agent and minister was no other than my grandfather himself, who had obtained possession of them before his exile from Soudan, and sold them to him. He accompanied the Emperor of the North Pacific in his flight; and seeing them on the point of being lost when the Emperor fell into the volcano, he darted after him in order to rescue, not the man, but the jewels, and this at the imminent risk of his own life. And he succeeded; for he grappled with the falling monarch, and as they rushed downward through the air together, tore the sacred gems from his person, and then let go to save himself, while the king pursued his downward career, and was lost in the fiery gulf. This have I learnt from my grandfather's papers."

Here a private but animated conversation occurred in a group in which we recognized several of the most distinguished members of the Stock Exchange and of the Sanhedrim. They appeared after a little to have come to an agreement on some knotty point, for the venerable chief of the Sanhedrim came forward, and addressing the Court, said that while in all matters affecting the foreign policy of the nation, they deferred to the authority of the Stock Exchange, it devolved upon him as chief of the home and local government, to put certain ques-

tions to the young gentleman respecting whom such remarkable revelations had just been made.

"And first," he said, "I have to enquire precisely respecting the gems composing the sacred Talisman of Solomon. Whom do you, sir, consider the lawful proprietor at this moment?"

"Myself, undoubtedly," replied Mr. Carol, (who will forgive us for not encumbering our present narrative with his newly-discovered titles of honor). "Myself, undoubtedly. But I consider that I hold them in trust for the future Emperor of Soudan."

The old man shook his head, and smiled blandly.

"There is a want of legal precision in your language. Not that this detracts from your merits, my dear Prince, as a prince, if you will allow me to be the first so to call you. If you hold them in trust for another, they are not your own. May I ask you to define your title to them more precisely?"

"I consider that I have four distinct grounds of ownership," replied the young man. "First, I inherit them from my grandfather, to whose property there is no joint or rival claimant. Secondly, they were found on an iceberg, when otherwise they were hopelessly lost, and settled on me as a free gift by the finder, my beloved foster-father and guardian here, Bertie Greathead. Thirdly, they are mine by right of a clause inserted in the bill of sale by which they were transferred to the late Emperor, a clause reserving to me the right of repurchasing them within one year of my coming of age.

"You are a better lawyer than I was giving you credit for being," interrupted his interrogator, "though you have failed to perceive that all this depends upon the validity of your grandfather's title. But, my dear sir, are you aware that few men, even in Jerusalem, possess a fortune sufficient to purchase those jewels?"

"I do not lack the means," responded the young man, with the admirable simplicity of one born to vast fortunes. "And I have yet another title to them, and one that renders it unnecessary to rely on my inheritance from my grandfather. But for me, they had been lost for ever in the great Sahara. More-

over, my right to them was recognized by the late Emperor, both in the fact of his purchasing them of me at their full value, and his consenting to my reclamation of them. His dying injunctions prove this. At the same time he commended his son to me. It is at my option, then, either to restore to him the jewels, or to give him their equivalent in money. But for the happy termination of the revolution which excluded him from the throne, he would, of course, have preferred to receive their value."

The Chief of the Sanhedrim here raised his bent form to its full height, and glancing round on the assembly as if with conscious pride in the supreme importance of the words he was about to utter, said:

"Then, since these invaluable crown jewels are your very own, as well as means ample enough to have purchased them if they had not been so; and since you are, next to the Prince of Abyssinia and Emperor of Soudan, the sole survivor of a royal race in Israel, I, on behalf of my brethren of the Sanhedrim, and the people of Palestine as represented by a quorum of the Stock Exchange of Jerusalem here assembled, do invite you to solve the difficulty which has long operated to the national disadvantage, and accept the throne of Syria and the adjoining provinces of Persia, Arabia, and the Euphrates. You have yourself proved that the Sacred Talisman of Solomon is your own, by a treble or quadruple right. The lawful possessor of that talisman alone is worthy to sit on the throne of David and Solomon, ruling the tribes of Israel."

As he concluded, loud acclaims rent the air, and many a hoary head bowed in thankfulness, and many a lip trembling with emotion uttered the ancient expression of supreme content, "Now can I depart in peace, having seen the salvation of Israel."

The Prince of Soudan, however, was observed to turn very pale, doubtless thinking that the boasted heirloom of his race had now in very deed departed from him forever.

The first attempt of the new-found Prince of Israel to reply to this flattering proposal, was lost in the hubbub of voices con-

gratulating each other on the successful issue to a long and difficult search; for, as all the world knows, it needs but a sovereign worthy to sit on the throne of Jerusalem, to consolidate a great eastern empire under Jewish sway.

On essaying a second time to make himself heard, for none heeded his answer, taking for granted its affirmative character, the elder Englishman was observed to say something as if in remonstrance to the prospective monarch of the Orient. When, after this, he obtained a hearing, he said, with becoming modesty, that a proposition of such magnitude was one for deliberating upon, for which a certain time was necessary. Let the meeting be adjourned, and perhaps on the following day he would be prepared to communicate his decision to the authorities.

The Assembly then broke up, without any resolution being come to respecting the express object of its meeting, the greater and nearer event having rendered cool deliberation for the present impossible. We hope in our issue of to-morrow evening to communicate to our readers and the world the great news that at length "a king rules in Zion, and hath gathered the peoples under his wings," as saith one of our ancient poets.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was perhaps fortunate that beside Bertie and the Prince, only one person in the whole assembly caught the remark which Criss had first uttered in reply to the proposition last made to him. That person was the President himself, who, fascinated as it were by the presence of his new-found son, suffered no look or word of Criss's to escape him. Criss's exclamation had been to the effect that he seemed to have lighted upon a congregation of Judases. It was at Bertie's entreaty that he abstained from repeating the remark so as to be heard by all.

As the assembly began to disperse, a messenger approached

Criss, and said that the President earnestly desired his attendance in an adjoining chamber. Criss paused but to hold a few moments' conversation with Bertie and the Prince, and then went to meet his father.

"Child of my Zöe!" exclaimed the latter advancing to embrace him, "the shock of joy on recognizing you just now had well nigh killed me. Even yet am I feeble through its effects. But you still look somewhat coldly on me. Do you doubt that I am your father?"

"I do not doubt it," said Criss, "though it was only during the last hour, and by means of certain relics which I obtained from the Lebanon, that I have been led to recognize you. This portrait was carefully treasured by her. It is evidently the portrait of yourself."

"Living image of her that you are, with just a trace of myself and my own Greek lineaments, behold here the companion picture to that, the picture of her, which has never left my breast, even as she has never vanished from my heart."

And he placed in Criss's hands an exquisite likeness of the unfortunate Zöe.

Earnestly and tearfully Criss gazed upon his mother's picture, but he still failed to respond to his father's demonstrations of affection. The latter perceived his coldness, and sought to know the cause.

"You are reproaching me in your mind for the neglect of which you consider me to have been guilty in regard to you," he said; "but believe me, I have sought and sought in vain to ascertain what had become of my lost wife and her father. All that I could ascertain was, that shortly after their ascent from Damascus, a tremendous hurricane occurred, and they were never seen again. You were not born then, you know, though your birth was expected. As it was, you must have made your appearance too soon. Our marriage was a concealed one. Zöe continued to live with her father, who was truly a man to be dreaded, by me as well as by her; and we were tortured with anxiety to keep her condition a secret from him. Believe me, I do not deserve your reproach on the score of neglect."

"My father," replied Criss with emotion, "you have failed utterly to divine the nature of the feeling which divides us. I have to thank you, and I do thank and bless you, for having infused into me that admixture of Greek blood which has saved me from having a sordid nature, and enabled me to recognize the supremacy of beauty and goodness over rank and wealth. But how is it that you, who are all Greek, could so far abandon the traditions of your race as to propose to your newly discovered son a course incompatible with honor?"

"For one side of your mental composition you may possibly be indebted to me," returned his father. "I mean the Æsthetic. But there you must stop. The Greeks, no more than the Jews, are to be credited with the other qualities you ascribe to them. If Jacob be their type, Ulysses is ours. Morality was never our forte; but on the contrary, with all our addiction to philosophy and art, we have ever been an insincere and venal people. No, for what you possess of moral sentiment, you must thank your mother, not me; or rather her mother, for there you obtained your Teutonic characteristics."

"I have Teuton blood in me! I am indeed glad. The blood of the race to which Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Tennyson, and Göethe belonged! as well as of the race of Homer, Æschylus, and Plato! in addition to that of Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul! What a privilege, but also what a responsibility! I am so glad to be a Teuton! I understand now the secret of my sympathetic yearnings towards the grandest of the world's races, in its combination of the intellectual with the moral; the first race in which Conscience was elevated to its proper supremacy."

"Well," resumed his father, "you see you have judged our conduct by some code which finds no recognition here. Neither my proposition that you should appropriate the throne of Soudan; nor that of the chief of the Sanhedrim, that you should retain the Talisman of Solomon, to grace the restored crown of Israel, rather than follow a sentimental impulse, shocked the prejudices of any of our people. Following the divine law anciently given to them, the Jews, now as ever, refuse to recog-

nize as right anything that tells against themselves. Whatever makes for them is good, whatever against them evil. This in Jerusalem is the sole standard of morality. I, as a Greek, follow them in this; only, also as a Greek, I prefer things to be pretty rather than ugly.

"Besides, I consider myself entitled to hate those who robbed me of my Zöe. It was through the persecutions your grandfather suffered from the reigning branch in Soudan, that he fled, and she was lost to me. It was nothing to me that he deserved their enmity. Right or wrong, I suffered by it, and I resented it. But I have been avenged. For it is I who have been chief agent in grinding down their people by taxation, and so bringing about the revolution with all its dread results. It is I who have kept the Committee from acceding to all entreaties for a mitigation. If I wished you to supplant that branch, it was for personal vengeance. If I now wish you to become sovereign of this country, it is as much for the sake of seeing my son the instrument of their punishment, as for any other ambition.

"And now that we perfectly understand each ŏther, come to my palace and abide with me. Being my home, it is yours also. We shall have much to tell each other. Together we will pen the acceptance of the offer conveyed to you by the chief of the Sanhedrim, an acceptance which will make me father of a far greater sovereign than any Emperor of Central Africa can ever be. For as king of Israel, the wealth of the world will be at your command. At your bidding, mighty capitalists will loosen or tighten their purse-strings, and the nations that are afar off will follow peace or rush to war. Hail! Christmas, Sovereign of Judea! What a coronation will thine be! When, amid the glories of the noblest edifice of the modern world, noblest in its uses, noblest in its architecture, infinitely in every respect surpassing its famous predecessors on the same site—even the temple reared by him whose sacred Talisman will adorn thy brows—Ah! I forgot. Oh, my son, relinquish this infatuation. Keep, keep the gems, and let them not go to the barbarians of Africa. Solomon himself

refused nothing to his father David, not even his dying request, involving, as it did, at least according to your code—the Teuton code—crime and dishonor. Surely you, then, as sitting on the throne of David and Solomon, will not have the presumption to affect to surpass them in virtue, and condemn the morality of that great Semitic race whose blood you share! The cost is indeed a slight one to pay for such an heir-loom."

"We place a different estimate on the cost of such a deed," replied Criss, speaking with less restraint in his manner than before, for he was beginning to regard his father as partially deranged, rather than wilfully dishonest. "But you forget that the objection I raised before the committee was not against being king of Soudan merely, but against being a king at all."

"My son, you will have to forget what you said on that point. The Jews have too long set their hearts on precisely such a solution of their political difficulties as the discovery of you presents. They will not consent to waive their nation's longings in deference to your fantasies. Being in Jerusalem, you are in their power, and should you persist in your refusal, they are quite capable of taking you by force and making you their king. Even flight will serve you little when they are determined, for Mammon is the god of this world, and they are his priests. No nation can or dare harbor you from them. And I warn you that I for one shall not interfere with their action."

"Well," said Criss, in a light and cheerful tone, "we will not talk more about that just now. You can understand that at the heights from which I am accustomed to survey the world, its loftiest eminences are apt to seem very low. But I really must leave you now. My friends will be expecting me at the hotel. Farewell for to-night, my father. An eventful day, such as this has been, merits extra repose."

"What! will you not enter and sleep beneath my roof on this the first night of our meeting? It is true I have no family to whom to introduce you. I dwell in this palace," he said pointing to a magnificent edifice before which they had

now arrived, "solitary and sad. No new ties have been mine. It is as if I had waited expressly for you to come to me—you, who are the sole heir of my heart and my wealth. At least enter and eat with me, if you cannot all at once reconcile yourself to your new ties."

It was late when Criss returned to his hotel. Going straight to Bertie's room, he roused him from a light sleep, saying,

"Now, dear Bertie, we must be off. Is the Prince prepared, think you?"

"Perfectly, and impatient to start. He is congratulating himself on having a friend and relative in the King of the Jews."

"Ah," said Criss, "we shall have to devise some other means for reducing taxation in Soudan. Now, come softly, and say not a word. Unless I have been misinformed, it is necessary that our departure be made very much like an escape."

"Escape! But will you not accept the——?"

"Accept! Why, my dear Bertie, don't you know I am a Republican?"

"That may be a reason for refusing to have a King over one, but not for refusing to be a King oneself. Besides, in putting back this Prince, you are setting up a King."

"Oh, yes. I do not dictate to others. If they prefer a monarchy, they are welcome. Here is the Prince's door."

The three descended in silence to the aëromotive-house, and having deposited an ample payment with the custodian, were soon aloft and far away on their flight across the desert towards the capital of Soudan, the Prince travelling with Bertie in his capacious car, and Criss keeping near them in his own little Ariel.

Ere they lost sight of the lights of the sleeping city, Criss cast a look back upon it, and murmured,

"Oh, Jerusalem! mightiest upon earth in thy power for good, by means of the wealth at thy command; feeblest, in thy ignorance of that wealth's high uses! To think that I could stoop to be a king of a people who value money for its own

sake, and whose chief men counsel treachery! Was it for this that thy prophet-poets of old heralded thy restoration! Not until thou hast exchanged thy father Jacob as thy type, for that nobler exemplar, even the Son whom, while rejected of thee, all other nations revere, wilt thou become in truth a People chosen and blessed."

And when morning came, and the cool stars overhead melted away and vanished in the hot desert blasts, and the travellers rose high in search of fresh airs and favoring currents, Criss again thought of what money might do to redeem the earth, could its possessors but consent to the sacrifice; and how, under its present misuse, it was little better than a curse. And a longing came over him to bury all the wealth of himself and his race in the sands of the Sahara, in the hope that, peradventure, such descent into Hades of the god Mammon, might be followed by a resurrection and ascent to better things for the whole human race.

A few days later, and the universal press of the world contained an account of the successful expedition of the Federal aërial fleet to Soudan, and the restoration of the Empire. The rejoicings on the occasion were described as being of a somewhat novel character.

"The young Emperor," they stated, "wishing to impress his subjects with a sense of the advantages of a higher civilization than they have as yet attained, and anxious to lose no time in improving their condition (for it appears that he has developed a hitherto unsuspected tendency to philanthropy), requested the admiral to signalize his accession by an exhibition of the destructive powers of the squadron.

"The admiral, deeming that the expense of such a demonstration would be amply compensated by its moral effects, consented, and was accordingly requested to destroy the poorest and most unhealthy quarter of the Bornouse capital. For this comprehensive measure, the Emperor obtained the consent of the inhabitants of the district in question, engaging on his part to rebuild and furnish the doomed quarter in a greatly

improved fashion, and to provide for the population during the interval.

"The proffer was accepted, and an evening fixed for the pyrotechnic demonstration; the inhabitants of the doomed district being first comfortably accommodated in various barracks and other public buildings. The admiral then detached a couple of vessels for the service. These, cruising slowly round and round over the town within the assigned limits, at a moderate elevation, dropped at short intervals during a period of two or three hours, shells containing explosives and combustibles, the native troops being employed to keep the fire from spreading beyond the doomed quarter.

"The inhabitants seem to have been so delighted with the spectacle, that there is some reason to fear that its beauty may have tended to counteract the wholesome impression intended to be produced, and that an attack on the white settlers will henceforth be considered a cheap price for such a display of fireworks. A subsequent examination showed that not only was every street and building, no matter what the strength of its construction, utterly destroyed, but the very foundations on which they stood were ploughed and dug up by the bursting of the shells after they had buried themselves in the earth.

"It is rumored that the sudden collapse of the revolution, and restoration of the Empire, have been achieved under British influence, and accompanied by some very extraordinary circumstances. However this may be, we trust that the spirit shown by the young ruler, and the good understanding subsisting between him and his people, will be productive of the happiest results to the country at large.

"The Federal fleet has since returned home."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

The commencement of the reign of the new Emperor of Soudan was contemporaneous with three notable events in Europe. The first concerned France.

After oscillating for centuries between a rule founded upon the ignorance of its peasant masses, namely, the rule of a priesthood that fostered and throve upon that ignorance; and a rule emanating from and sustained by the enlightened and naturally impatient denizens of its towns and cities,—France at length found at her head one who, while inheriting the most celebrated name in her historic roll, possessed also the Conscience, through the lack of which his ancestors had failed to secure stability for their dynasty and nation.

A Napoleon had now arisen who had the courage to follow an English example, and adopt the only method that could free his country from the evil which had led to all its misfortunes. Seeing that a Henry VIII. was as necessary to complete the Emancipation of France as it had been to commence the Reformation of England, this prince determined to play such a part. It is owing to this determination, and the success with which it was carried into execution, that the Gallican Church is now independent of the Papacy, its priests deriving all their honors and emoluments directly from the head of the State, with liberty to marry, and be as other citizens in interest and heart. But this is not all. The race of the Napoleons has

never been an altogether unselfish one. The example of England and his own perceptions convinced the French ruler that there could be no element of permanency in a State the bulk of whose citizens were too ignorant to comprehend the obligations of citizenship. It was not enough that Napoleon had set the church free from Rome; he must also set the people free from the church. The second feat was harder of execution than the first. It might suit the priests to hold their functions and benefices from a home instead of from a foreign authority; but it assuredly would not suit them to lose their own authority over their people. They declared themselves content with the change already made, and which, following English precedents, they called the Reformation. But the government was firm in its resolve not to remain behind its great neighbor in respect of that which had been the chief agent of her greatness. France must follow England in having an Emancipation as well as a Reformation. The National Church must identify itself with the National School, and the teaching in both must aim at the free development of the understanding and the conscience. This, as we know, involved the substitution of evidence and utility for authority and tradition, as the basis of all education.

I need not dwell upon the despair of the French priests in presence of the necessity thus forced upon them of going to school again to unlearn all their old habits and ideas. The Government was firm with them, but it was also tender. Time was allowed. The old ones were pensioned off. The younger adapted themselves to the new regime. And so it has come that France now at length sees her youngest generations growing up in the enjoyment of their rational faculties rationally developed, and her institutions endowed with a stability they have never before known. Under an educational regime which repudiates all dogmatic teaching in favor of that of experience, her ancient race of Communistic *Doctrinaires* have learnt to regard security of individual property as the first essential of civilization. In short, France has, through the education of her people, passed out of what geologists would call the catastrophic era, into the era of gradual evolution, long ago entered

upon by the Anglo-Teutonic races, and to be adopted finally, as we shall see, even by the dark-skinned Turanians of Central Africa.

But France was not the last of the Celtic race to tread the inevitable path of modern civilization. Ireland remained. And it is to Ireland that the second notable event of this period relates. It was a co-ordinate of the event just described as occurring in France. Kindred alike in race and religion with France, Ireland could not remain uninfluenced by the progress of that country. Ireland suffered France to do for her what she had persistently refused to accept from England. The essential basis of all modern civilization consists, as cannot too often be repeated, in the early development of the popular intelligence. Ireland, preferring the priest to the schoolmaster, had kept her people in the same condition of ignorance as the peasantry of France. France emancipated, and her people educated, Ireland must not lag behind.

But Ireland had not, like France, a strong ruler to urge her onward. It had long been the policy of England to let Ireland do as she pleased, provided only she remained in close political alliance with her. Ireland might emancipate herself, and England would rejoice thereat, but could not help her. So invincible were the antagonisms of race and religion; so strong England's sense of justice and respect for the individuality of peoples.

It was in accordance with the inveterate papalism of the Irish character, that even the "Protestant" church of that country was constituted. A once famous English statesman, having acquired power by the popular sympathies which distinguished one side of his mind, used it for the gratification of the ecclesiastical tendencies which had possession of his other side. Availing himself of a period of dissatisfaction with the then existing state of the Irish branch of the National Church, he declined to wait until the public mind should be fairly enlightened, and took advantage of a political crisis to detach that branch altogether from the nation, and erect it into a sect, endowing it at the same time with a large portion of the National Church property. Thus, deprived of the fund and

organization set apart by the providence of previous generations for promoting the highest welfare of its whole people; and handed over almost helpless to the two great religious parties which divided nearly the whole country between them, the progress of Ireland was for centuries put back. Her sole hope lay in the system of national education, which the British Government had already set in operation; a sorry reed to lean upon, when the two dominant parties of Catholic and Protestant Episcopalians, as they were uncouthly denominated, were equally opposed to the development of the popular mind apart from ecclesiastical traditions, and one of them could bring to bear against such development the wealth of the national establishment, with which it had been so unfairly endowed.

Spain, influenced by emancipated Italy, had long been free, and her people educated. France and Ireland alone of European peoples remained beneath the shadow of the Dark Age. The former having now emerged, the latter ventured timidly to set her foot on the path of human progress.

Her leading sons said—

"Let us amalgamate the resources of all the religious sects whose principles and divisions have so long ministered to our hindrance. Let us set ourselves free from the trammels of tradition, by remodelling the churches upon the basis of the school, so that we too, like Italy, like Spain, like France, aye and like England, may have one all-comprehending national organization, devoted to the promotion of our highest welfare, intellectual, moral and spiritual; and constituting at once the national church and national school system of Ireland."

They could not say *like America* also. America never has possessed a national church which she could turn to account in developing the national mind. Her young, it is true, come, as a matter of course, under the beneficial influence of an education provided by the State on a broad basis; but, leaving school early, as her children almost invariably do, they find no high standard of knowledge and thought to sustain them in after life; so that America is still, so far as regards the general education and sentiment of her people, behind the European

standard. Her own people, however, say that it is because they have so much *land* to look after, in comparison with other peoples. This may to some extent account for the defect. Too much of Earth is apt to be an impediment to the cultivation of the higher nature, which regards the heaven of the Ideal.

The third notable event of this time took place, not upon the arena of nations, but in a chamber in the Triangle. It was a consultation between Christmas Carol and Lord Avenil on the subject of the trigonometrical survey of Central Africa, which was being made by the Emperor of Soudan, at the instance of his cousin.

The two former events were in no way connected with our story. They are referred to only for the purpose of illustrating the condition of Europe, as compared with that of its comparatively barbarous neighbor. Europe, freed from pressure of physical circumstance, could devote herself to matters of high moral import; while Africa, as the event last named shows, was still concerned with the material elements affecting her future welfare. In short, much in the same way that a tribe of savages now existing in one part of the world, represents the former condition of civilized races now existing in other parts, so Soudan represented for us very much the condition in which we were at a time not long previous to the Victorian era.

The survey in question was sufficiently complete to demonstrate the feasibility of an idea which had occurred to Criss. As it was a practical idea, and one promising vast material results, it was adopted with alacrity by Avenil. To his own surprise and delight, Avenil found himself admiring a vast conception, and encouraging a vast project, that conception and that project having originated with his dreamy and idealistic ward. As with all vast projects, it would, probably, for some time have remained a project, had not special circumstances occurred to hasten its realization.

A terrible plague broke out in Soudan, ravaging in particular the plains which extend from Lake Tchad to the mountains, and not sparing the white settlers on the hill sides. The

plague was caused by an extraordinary overflow of the lake and its tributaries, which kept the surrounding country in the condition of a swamp for a much longer period than was usual. The overflow and the plague were the circumstances which hastened the execution of Criss's project. This project itself was nothing less than the draining of the Plateau, by converting the river *Shary*, the main feeder of the lake, and the lake itself into a regular well-ordered navigable water system, which should discharge itself into the Sahara, and either by the deposit of its sediment there form a new delta, akin to that of Egypt, or flow, a continuous river, to the sea.

On the breaking out of the plague, Criss, ever on the watch for an opportunity of being useful, had gathered a powerful staff of doctors, and transported them by aërial transit, with all the appliances of their art, to the afflicted region. As the disease contained symptoms which were new, some little time elapsed before the precise nature of its essential poison was ascertained and the antidote found. When at length the doctors were able to work with good effect, myriads had fallen, and among them the whole family of the Hazeltines, Nannie's relations. Nannie herself escaped unharmed. Utterly forlorn, she accepted Criss's offer of a home with his friends in London, until at least her father could be communicated with. She was, accordingly, brought over, at Criss's instance, by Bertie Greathead, and consigned to the care of the Miss Avenils, while Criss remained at his post of benevolence in Central Africa.

Actuated by Criss's influence and example, the young Emperor labored assiduously to mitigate the sufferings of his people, and entered warmly into the scheme proposed for preventing a renewal of them. He did not conceal from Criss the passionate preference which he felt for the achievements of war over those of peace; neither did he abandon his desire of vengeance on his hated neighbors, the Egyptians. But of this last he said nothing; for he saw that at present the stability of his throne depended on his following his cousin's counsel, and Criss had given him to understand that he would be no party to a war of aggression. He had not yet been crowned,

nor had the sacred talisman of his race yet returned to his keeping. The quiet determination shown by Criss in respect of these jewels had served to rivet yet more firmly his influence over the Emperor.

On the approach of the anniversary of his accession, the Emperor was anxious for the ceremonial which was to complete his dignity. It was with no slight reluctance and chagrin that he adopted Criss's counsel, and issued a proclamation deferring the event for another year. "A coronation," said this document, "should be a season of universal rejoicing. The Emperor, sharing in the afflictions of his people, cannot rejoice while they are suffering, neither can he call on them to rejoice while yet smarting under recent bereavements. Let Emperor and People continue to work together for the general good, and when the plague is happily stayed, and the memory of its sorrows faded, then shall all Soudan join in a grand festival of dignity and delight."

Criss's repeated injunction to his Imperial cousin was in this wise:—"Do your duty up to the highest point to which it is discernible. Do it because it is your duty, as well as that of every man to do the best he finds in him, and without thinking of reward. Do your duty, and perchance a reward will come, even beyond that of having been able so to do."

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders, and said that he should be acting contrary to all the traditions, not of his own race merely, but of all kings and emperors he had ever heard of. Nevertheless, to show his regard for his relative and friend, he would do his duty as thus indicated.

Criss had an idea which at present he kept carefully concealed in his own breast. He also had information which he with equal care strove to keep from reaching the Emperor. The idea was to utilize the River Niger in the regeneration of Africa, by borrowing at least a portion of its abounding waters, and turning them, at the northernmost point of their vast bend, into the thirsty Sahara, to swell the stream to be drawn from Lake Tchad. The information was concerning the disposition of the people of the great congeries of States, of which Tim-

buctoo is the chief, towards a political union with the Empire of Central Africa.

The fame of the young Emperor's conduct since his accession, especially in regard to the plague, had spread far and wide, and won for him a victory which not all the arms of his predecessors had been able to accomplish. To add to their dominions the teeming and wealthy provinces of the Niger, with its ancient and famous capital, and extend their sway from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, had for generations been the chief ambition of the reigning house of Abyssinia. The force of virtue was now to accomplish a conquest denied to the force of arms. Timbuctoo, the Mecca of the myriad caravans of pilgrim merchants, who, starting from Morocco on their camel-ships, traversed the yellow desert to the wondrous region of gold and ivory, and arriving on the banks of the Niger, greeted it as a sacred stream ; Timbuctoo, once a favorite abode of civilization, religion, and learning, and still a stronghold of Islam, was about to stretch out its hands to the chief of a rival people and creed, and say, "Rule over us, and let us be thy people." Never in the history of the world had Conduct thus incontrovertibly demonstrated itself to be more than Creed, in its power to produce peace and good will among men.

The young Emperor, while surprised at the fame of his good deeds, had no idea of the practical shape that fame was about to take. Criss, whose Ariel was by this time known throughout the whole of Soudan, from the Straits of Bab el Mandeb to the shores of Senegambia, and who was everywhere recognized as the Emperor's cousin and friend, had held many a secret conference with the leading men of the Niger district. The beneficence of the new regime had already won them, and Criss's foreshadowing of the mighty works in contemplation for the redemption of the Plateau from the physical evils which beset it, made them eager to see their country also in the enjoyment of like blessings. It was made plain to Criss that, did he will it, he might himself become their king. Even to the chiefs of Timbuctoo, he said no word to indicate his designs upon the

Niger. That must be a matter of after deliberation, when the peoples should be united under the same sceptre. The very idea of being deprived of even a part of their river, would, in the absence of explanation and information sufficient to reconcile them to it, inevitably produce a reaction in their sentiments.

Criss contrived that the intelligence of the union of the provinces of the Niger with the Empire of Soudan, should be made known in such a way as to produce the greatest effect upon the Emperor and the world in general. The long-wished-for ceremonial of the Coronation was signalized, not only by the restoration of the sacred gems to the imperial diadem, but by the presentation of the homage of the representatives of all the provinces of Central Africa, to the Emperor of their hearts and their choice.

Before finally giving in their adherence, the new provinces had made one stipulation—that their religion should be respected. The Emperor's reply, dictated by Criss, had, wonderful to say, given complete satisfaction, alike to the intelligent and to the fanatic. He had told them that he regarded it as his business as Emperor, to punish offences against man; it was for God to deal with offences against Himself, and this was a function which no man could usurp without being guilty of blasphemy.

Many nations sent their congratulations to the young Emperor. The arrival at Bornou of the various ambassadors and their suites, in gorgeous aërial conveyances, from all parts of the world, filled the multitudes with admiration, and eagerness for liberty to navigate the air themselves. They were given to understand that when they were sufficiently educated and civilized to enter the Confederacy of the Nations, they also should be entrusted with the same high privilege of navigating the atmosphere—the kingdom of the heavens being open only to those who knew how to use the earth without abusing it.

The demeanor of the young Emperor towards the ambassadors was everything that Criss could wish, with one exception. His feelings towards Egypt did not allow him to pay the same

respect to her representative as to the rest. Indeed, to speak precisely, the Emperor showed such scant courtesy to the Egyptian ambassador, as to convince Criss that his disposition still retained a considerable modicum of the ancient barbarism of his race. He did not, however, despair of ultimately eradicating it.

CHAPTER II.

NANNIE was now an orphan. The intelligence brought her no grief. She was penniless; but she cared not for it. If the world had no place for a young, beautiful, vivacious woman, the sooner, thought Nannie, she quitted it the better. Her business was to love and be loved, and a fig for the civilizations if they required more of her in order to live. Men, indeed! What were men for, except to support women? Better go back to her country—Scotland or Soudan—and take the charity of those who knew her family, than study and toil, and be dull and stupid, and hate everything, and be cared for by none—not even by——

And Nannie's tirade ended in a burst of tears, much to the astonishment of Susanna Avenil, who shook her head and looked grave for a considerable period before venturing a word in mitigation of a frame of mind so utterly incomprehensible to her.

"Ah, my dear child," she at length observed. "Men now-a-days are apt to fall in love with women for the capacities of their minds and the dispositions of their hearts, and not for their faces merely, no matter how charming they may be. I doubt much whether even your sweet face will win a man really worth the having. Besides, your self respect must prevent you from making yourself dependent upon such a chance. Women in our times are above trusting for the means of existence to the favor of anyone, least of all to that of a member of the rival sex."

Nannie's only answer was a pout of such exquisite, petulant loveliness, that Mistress Avenil could not help smiling, and saying,—

"Well, Nannie dear, men are foolish sometimes; and if you look like that, there is no knowing what they may not be inclined to do. But it is not as a woman, but as a dear and naughty child that you will be loved. I suspect I shall have to turn you over to masculine treatment and advice, ere you sober down into a practical being. Now my brother——"

"Oh, no, no," exclaimed Nannie; "he is much too formidable a personage to be troubled about me."

"Well, you are fond of Mr. Greathead—"

"Yes, I am fond of Mr. Greathead. He likes me too."

"Well, perhaps his advice will be more welcome than mine."

"I didn't know he was at home."

"He is coming back very soon, on a commission from Mr. Carol, who I am sure will be glad to hear you have consulted with Mr. Greathead, and begun to learn something useful——"

"I don't care to make Mr. Carol glad one bit," said Nannie, firmly. "If he cares enough about me to be glad, why does he go away and stay so long without coming to see me?"

"Mr. Carol has much to do in the world. He is not one to neglect his duties, even for the pleasure your society might afford him. Besides, he no doubt thinks, if he thinks about you at all, that you are too much occupied with your studies to know whether he is absent or present."

"Is he—is Mr. Carol really a man?" asked Nannie. "He makes me think sometimes that he must be something like the angels he meets up in the sky. He is always thinking of duty, and doesn't care for people, I mean for anybody in particular."

"I really must tell him of your serious impeachment of his humanity," said Susanna; "perhaps it will lead him to turn over a new leaf, and enact some other character."

"Do," said Nannie, "I don't like anyone I like to be cold blooded."

"I am glad you like him, for I am sure you ought, if only in gratitude."

"I wish you hadn't said that. One doesn't like people through gratitude. But I like him well enough not to mind owing him a kindness. I hope he won't think I like him for gratitude."

"But you do not like him well enough to do what you don't like yourself, to please him?"

"You mean about these stupid books and tasks. Anybody who likes me, ought to like me as I am, and not want to make me different. That is liking some one else, not me."

"My idea of liking a person," said Mistress Avenil, "is trying to please them by doing as they wish."

"And my idea," returned the indomitable Nannie, "is making them like me whether I try to please them or not."

It passed the ability of the whole Avenil family to understand Nannie. They could not deny her native quickness of comprehension, whenever she gave a moment's attention to any of their occupations, but she seemed utterly incapable of submitting to the discipline of training, so as to learn anything thoroughly. Yet, while indifferent to the whole range of artistic or scientific acquirements, in whatever related to womanly airs and graces she was a born adept. Her perception of the harmonious in color and elegant in form was marvellous and unerring. Bessie Avenil declared that she defrauded society in not being a milliner. Her intuitions as to character were like sudden inspirations. The younger Avenil girls took to her as a geologist to a first discovered specimen of an extinct species; shewing her all the kindness in their power by having her to stay with them in return, and affording her every facility for acquiring knowledge and skill in the various vocations wherewith they themselves had been brought up to minister to their own wants and the requirements of the community.

But town life and town arts did not suit Nannie. She was of the wild, and loved only the open country. The difference between the pursuits of town and those of country was to her as the difference between death and life. It thus came that whenever Bertie was at his residence on the Surrey Downs, she

made Ariel Cottage her home. He was as a father to her, and whenever she saw Criss it was in Bertie's presence.

Criss had a charming place of his own not far from his old friend, consisting of a mansion and garden, but Nannie had as yet scarcely seen the interior, and the owner was rarely in it for many days together.

Criss's life lay now between England and Central Africa, though his thoughts often turned toward Jerusalem. Once, and once only, was he on the point of revisiting the Jewish capital. His father had written to him saying that the offer of the throne was the result of the sudden access of enthusiasm, excited by the discovery of a scion of the ancient royal race of Israel in one so fitted by wealth and bearing, to grace it. There was little chance, he thought, of the offer being renewed; and it would be a crowning joy to his life to see his long-lost son at home in his father's house. His health, he said, was terribly broken, and in any case it could not be long before Criss came into his paternal inheritance.

On receipt of this, Criss made up his mind to start for Jerusalem. He first took the precaution, however, of consulting a confidential agent there respecting the probability of his being molested by the Jews with a view to the execution of their scheme. The information he received was of so suspicious a character that it caused him to delay until he could be quite sure of his safety from any plot. Indeed it implicated in no doubtful manner his own father, and in a degree and manner not yet clear, the young Emperor of Soudan. It was while Criss was corresponding with his father, that the latter was carried off by a sudden return of his heart complaint.

Though much disappointed by his son's persistent refusal to come into his schemes, he left him his blessing and his millions. And it was long before anything more was heard to justify the suspicions which had been raised respecting any plot in which Jerusalem was concerned.

Criss seemed to have realised the fact of his relationship too slightly to be seriously affected. It was an acquaintance rather than a parent that he had lost, and that an acquaintance acci-

dentally and inconveniently thrust upon him. Not only had no opportunity been given for the tie of nature to develop into one of affection and esteem, but there seemed little probability that it ever would have done so. Of his mother Criss had ever thought with much yearning; but so far from this being so with regard to his father, he had, by some instinct for which he could not account, come to look upon himself as in a measure exempt from the condition of generation by double procession ordinarily imposed upon mortals. It may be that his own mind was wont so vividly to personify Nature, especially in its creative aspect, as to make him, in the absence of other parents, feel himself to be derived directly from it.

It never occurred to Criss that his kindness to Nannie might entail upon him any responsibility in regard to her future. He took it for granted that under the sage tuition of his friends, and the sobering influences of English civilization, the pretty wayward child would soon learn to follow an even course of life, engaged in the ordinary duties and pleasures of the young gentlewoman of the period, and in the event of marriage overtaking her, accepting her fate with a quiet gladness. It was only by slow degrees that Criss's friends learnt to comprehend her character, and to discern the ruling, though to herself unconscious, motive of her demeanor.

Bertie Greathead, now well advanced in middle age, watched Nannie long and anxiously before the truth dawned upon him. Her preference for the freedom of a country life did not appear to him a sufficient reason why she should never be so happy as when enacting the part of mistress of his cottage. The dwelling itself was plain of aspect and devoid of luxury. His household and requirements were of the simplest. He himself made no pretence to be other than an honest, simple, tender-hearted man, of quiet and meditative habit. Yet Nannie would sulk and look cross whenever he left home, and she had to return to her friends in London; and beam with gladness when his return enabled her to visit the cottage again. Next to Criss, he was clearly the only person she cared to be with. And

even for Criss she seemed scarcely to care when she met him in the society of the Triangle, while when on the Downs with him she was blithe and happy as a bird.

Bertie took occasion one evening in the Cottage to twit her with her unnatural preference for an ordinary dwellingplace and the society of a dull old man, to the brilliance and animation of the Triangle. Nannie replied that she knew where she was happiest, and saw nothing odd in her not caring to be among people who were so clever and learned and civilized, that they looked upon her as a sort of natural curiosity; and that when she had a friend, she liked to have him all to herself, instead of sharing his attention with other people. It was not in "society" that she first knew "Mr. Carol," as she was obliged to call him in this stupid formal life, and it was not in "society" that she cared to see him. She was much happier to be alone there, and have Criss,—yes, she would call him Criss,—all to herself, or at least with only Mr. Greathead besides.

Nannie's greatest delight was to be seen walking or driving with Criss. She was perfectly aware of the admiration she excited, an admiration which had attracted many most eligible young men to her side, only to be repulsed with the coolest disdain. But by the side of Criss she fairly swelled with pride, and no smallest item of the sensation they produced was lost upon her. They certainly make a wondrously remarkable couple; but it may be doubted whether Nannie knew how much was contributed to the effect by Criss's own appearance.

"I like dark men. I look best beside a dark man. It needs the contrast to set me off properly. He looks better, too, beside a fair woman."

That was her way of putting it. But truly Criss's luminous soul shining through his almost Oriental skin, imparted to him an aspect sufficiently notable when compared with ordinary folk, without Nannie's angelic radiance to heighten the contrast.

As time went on, and Bertie's advancing age made him withdraw himself more and more from active life, and together with Nannie, he passed more and more of his time at the Cottage, it

became plain to him that her moods were coming to be wholly dependent upon Criss. His presence made her an embodied joy; his absence, a picture of dull despair. Whether consciously or unconsciously to herself, he had become the object of her life;—he in whose own life probably the last possible object was a woman.

As the Avenils had failed, so did Bertie fail, to induce Nannie to occupy herself with any sort of work or study. They sought for indications of some native bias which might be turned to account, but could detect none, except a certain fondness for children which led her to delight in decorating with ornaments any she could get hold of; that is, any that were pretty, for with her personal beauty was indispensable. Her kind critics were struck, too, with her preference for infants over older children, and a keener analysis made the discovery that the maternal instinct rivalled in her the instinct which made her desire to be attractive to the opposite sex. She loved babies as children love dolls, and boasted that no one else could handle them as well as she did. It was the difference between her genuine unsophisticated mode of expressing her nature, and that of the women of the older civilization, which prevented the mystery of Nannie's character from being sooner revealed. So hard is it for confirmed complexity to comprehend the simple elements even of its own constitution.

Bertie alone ventured to say a word to Criss respecting his protégée. She chanced to enter the room while they were speaking of her, and her strange preference for so quiet a life as that of the Cottage. Criss took the opportunity to inquire of her whether there was anything she needed to add to her comfort. Nannie said she supposed not. She didn't know of anything, at any rate of anything that he could provide. And then she turned very red, and with a sort of hysterical sob, hurried away from the room.

Distressed and perplexed, Criss turned to Bertie for an explanation. Had anything occurred to trouble her? he enquired.

"I cannot say, indeed," replied Bertie. "Young women

have never made a branch of my studies. Ask herself, quietly when alone, for instance, while walking in the garden some evening. Your return always elates, as much as your departure depresses her. My impression is that she thinks of nothing else from morning till night. Indeed, I don't see how she can, for she really has nothing else to occupy her thoughts. She is a very woman, so far as I understand woman's nature; and a woman of women in her nature."

"And I was looking upon her as but a child," said Criss.

"The young men of the neighborhood and the Triangle show more discernment," replied Bertie; "but she has no eyes or thoughts but for one. My dear boy, if you wish her well, you must contrive some change for her."

Criss did not see Nannie again until he came suddenly upon her in the garden on that same evening. If she had intended to avoid him it was too late, so she made up her rapid mind to lead the conversation herself. She had never shown much interest in Soudan, or his accounts of his doings there. Of the magnitude of his operations, and the position his birth and fortune gave him, she was ignorant. Now, she eagerly plied him with questions about the country which had so long been her home. What had become of the Hazeltine property? did her brother-in-law's relations live upon it, or had they sold it to strangers? would the people like to see her back among them? and could she not go and be useful in nursing the people with the plague, or do something else to pass the time? She supposed there must be some very nice folks there, as he seemed to like being there so much better than in England. And she wondered he did not stay there altogether, instead of taking the trouble to come home. And she wound up her incoherent array of questionings by suddenly taking off her hat, forgetting that it was too dark to see it, and asking him if he did not think it very pretty.

"And what have you and Bertie been quarrelling about?" asked Criss.

"Does he say we have quarrelled?"

"He has said nothing, save that I must ask yourself what has occurred to make you discontented."

"Did he say I am discontented?"

"No, you have yourself admitted as much."

"Oh."

"Is it not so?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know what?"

"That I am discontented, and have admitted it."

"Well, I won't tease you with questions. I will try and find out for myself, by watching you."

"You never stay long enough for that."

"I am going to stay longer than usual this time."

"Then you won't be able to find me out."

"Why?"

"Because when you are here I am never discontented."

"Very prettily said, Nannie. I shall reward you by showing you some of the pretty things in my house to-morrow."

"Oh, I do so long to see your house, and everything in it. I have only had one little peep, and it seemed so nice, I could not think how you could stay so much away from it. I hope it will take a long time to see it all."

"Well, you must come over early, and bring Bertie to breakfast, and spend the day with me."

Nannie went to bed radiant with pleasure. Criss and Bertie sat up some time to talk over the great engineering operations already in progress at Lake Tchad. There had been considerable opposition to the scheme on the part of the Conservatives of Bornou, who said that if Providence had wished a river to run from the lake into the Sahara, it would have made one; and also from the Economists, who said that whatever might be the result to posterity, the present generation would never obtain any return for the outlay. Criss's declaration that he would bear the responsibility, and pay the expense, silenced both parties. He had also purchased the consent of the tribes inhabiting the neighboring oases, to flood their country. Already was an army of laborers at work, with vast engineering appliances, but the scheme had not been bruited in Europe. Neither had his ultimate design upon the Niger been divulged.

This was to be contingent upon the experiment with Lake Tchad.

Bertie remarked that although he might succeed in restraining the overflow of the lake, and so vastly improving the condition of the plateau, he suspected that the desert could swallow up any amount of water that might be made to run into it.

Criss said that such might at first be the result, but Egypt was an example to the contrary. All depended upon whether the stream consisted of clear water, or was charged with sediment. The country about Lake Tchad was probably the largest alluvial plain in the world. He had made borings which showed the amount of soil to be practicably inexhaustible. The water would soon spread a layer of this on the sand, and a new Egypt and new Nile would arise in the midst of the Sahara. Besides, if necessary, he was prepared to run his drain right up into the vast swamps which occupy the heart of Nigritia itself. The only doubt was as to the precise direction the stream would take: whether towards the Atlantic on the north-west coast, opposite the Canary Isles; or north-east, towards the Mediterranean and the Libyan desert.

"Why, you will have done more than discover a world," exclaimed Bertie, as the vast scheme became unfolded before him. "You will have created one."

"My scheme involves far more even than I have told you," replied Criss. "A world without a sea, has no charms for me. The ocean which once filled the Sahara, alone can fill it again. But this belongs not to the present."

CHAPTER III.

A SOUND of rippling laughter and singing in the garden, drew Criss early to his window next morning. The impatient Nannie could not wait for the breakfast hour, or for Bertie to accompany her. Criss's housekeeper,—a young married woman,

who, with her husband and children, dwelt in the house,—was surprised by the apparition of Nannie, while the dew still lay thick on the lawn, saying she was come to stay all day, and demanding of her the baby, that she might nurse it until breakfast time.

Nannie and the housekeeper were excellent friends, and the young mother had already proved Nannie's qualifications for such an office. A charming picture to Criss did the two make in his garden: Nannie, with all the skill of an experienced nurse, tossing and fondling the child, and the child responding delightedly to her blandishments by throwing about its little limbs and crowing. Criss thought he had never seen Nannie look so lovely, or so womanly.

"Surely," thought he to himself, "that must be what she was made for. Poor child, what a pity it is there is no one here that she likes."

Nannie presided at Criss's breakfast table, precisely as she had learned to do at Bertie's; and Criss thought the period of his meal had never been so bright and cheerful before. After breakfast she disappeared for an hour, leaving the men to discuss the day's affairs, and was presently back in the garden with the child. Then returning, she told Criss that she came to remind him of his promise to show her the house and its contents; whereupon he took her into a room which hitherto had been seen by her only in its closed and muffled state, but now was manifest in all its beauty of ornament and decoration. This was the drawing-room, where Criss had arranged his paintings, and sculptures, and cabinets of curiosities. Opening one of these, he took out a necklace and locket, which had excited her admiration, and hung it round her fair neck. Nannie rushed in delight to the glass to admire herself thus decorated, and then returned it to Criss. But he told her that he hoped she would do him the favor to keep it for her own. Nannie said it was lovely, and suited her exactly, but she would rather not keep it; alleging as a reason, in answer to Criss's questionings, that she understood that only married or elderly women wore such jewels.

"But even if you cannot wear it at present," he said, "you can keep it until you have attained the necessary qualifications."

"No; I shall never marry," she answered, shortly.

"You never marry! My dear Nannie, what a fancy! Why, to see you with that child, anyone would think you were made for no other purpose."

"Appearances are very deceitful," said Nannie, demurely. "I could only marry where I was properly loved; and no one will love me like that. I am not a woman who could tolerate a man coming to me, and saying, 'Oh, I do love you with my whole heart so dearly, that I beg you will let me take you for a time on trial, to see what sort of a woman you will turn out.' That's what they do in Soudan. Mattie, my sister, was properly loved and properly married, for Frank took her for altogether at once. I am like her in that. I wouldn't be married in any other way. No rehearsals for me."

"You forget, Nannie, that the women as well as the men, have the benefit of the trial. Suppose you found yourself irrevocably tied to a man who was unworthy of you, or who did not 'properly' love you. One cannot always judge beforehand how people will agree in a new relationship."

"A woman who is a woman can always tell a man who is a man, when she sees him; and if she is a woman she can make him love her as he ought."

"Well, Nannie, at any rate you need have no misgivings on the score of not being properly loved, when your time comes. No man can be indifferent to your sweet face and winning ways."

"I don't believe you mean a word of it," exclaimed Nannie, "for you are quite indifferent to them yourself." And she composed her pretty lips into a pout, while her eyes sparkled, and her whole frame vibrated with quick vitality.

"So far from being indifferent to your charms, Nannie dear," replied Criss, "I have found myself wondering sometimes whether, if you had not been possessed of them, I should have acted by you as I have done, from a sense of duty only."

"Oh, I hope not!" cried Nannie; "I could not bear to have you do things for me from a sense of duty, and not because you admire and—and—care for me."

Nannie's profound sense of superiority to all codes whatever of morals, and her habit of unconsciously referring all conduct to the criterion of affection, had often struck Criss as a remarkable element in her character. It coincided with his own intuitions in respect to the infinite; for he had found himself as much at a loss to discern the connection between the spiritual and moral, as between the physical and moral worlds. And here was the animal world, as represented by one of its highest types—a lovely, impulsive girl—repudiating it also.

"Ah!" he said, "what a world this would be if the promptings of love were always in accordance with those of duty. We might drop the word *duty* out of our dictionaries altogether then, and *I like* would rightly take the place of *I ought.* But we must have very well-regulated natures for that to be so, you know."

"I am sure," returned Nannie, "that if it was anybody's 'duty' to like me properly, it would be his duty to do whatever I liked, too! And I know he would be repaid by being very happy in return."

"I don't doubt it in the least," replied Criss; "and I think he will be a very fortunate fellow who shall win the whole of your affectionate little heart for himself."

Nannie made a gesture of impatience, and turning to some article in the room, began asking him questions about it. The morning passed rapidly, and in the afternoon several of Criss's friends came, much to Nannie's discomposure, for it put an end to her exclusive possession of him. While resenting the demands made by these upon his attention, she was struck by the greatness of the deference they showed him. Having no conception of the position held by him in the regards of men, and having, moreover, seen him only among his oldest and most familiar friends, she found herself now compelled to make some modification in her view of him. And as nothing gave Nannie greater annoyance than having to modify a view once taken,

this, and his engrossment by strangers, combined to make the afternoon pass as disagreeably for her as the morning had passed pleasantly.

In the evening they were alone again, and Nannie's good temper returned; though she was still disconcerted at finding herself obliged to regard Criss as a personage of more importance than she had ever before deemed him. Nannie was very proud, and held herself to be as good as anyone. It was intolerable that any should deem themselves too good for her. And she shrank from the thought of Criss looking upon her as the occupant of a mere corner in his occasional regards, as might easily be the case if he were a great personage, engaged in important pursuits.

However, all reflections of this kind vanished in presence of the wonders revealed to her for the first time in the splendid microscope which Criss exhibited to her. For some time her faculty of surprise and admiration was so excited as to overpower all other faculties; but at length her manner changed, her delight and vivacity disappeared, and she pushed the instrument away, saying she could not bear it—it made her feel so insignificant. It was no good being bigger, or cleverer, or prettier, than those tiny, ugly specimens, if when you magnified them you found them just as beautiful and perfect as yourself. And it was but a qualified submission that she made when Criss told her that he, on the contrary, derived more spiritual comfort from the microscope than almost from anything else; inasmuch as by revealing the same perfect organization pervading the infinitely small that we find in the large, it demonstrates that nothing is too minute or unimportant to be the subject of the Divine law and providence.

Nannie expressed her approval of this thought, but said that, after looking through the microscope, it seemed to her as if there were no such differences as small and great, ugly and pretty.

Criss spent the next day in London, returning to Bertie's in the evening. Nannie passed most of the time he was there in

the garden, saying she felt the house too close for her, and preferred the air. Again they talked about her, and Bertie said that Nannie had confessed that she had never been so happy and so miserable as yesterday. The strength of her feelings, he said, fairly frightened him, and he did not know to what they might bring her, unless she were provided with some object on which to bestow them.

"But why should she have been so happy, and why so miserable at my house?"

"Well, so far as I can make out, she was happy because she was with the only friend she has in the world; and miserable because that friend did not seem to be equally engrossed by her."

"But," said Criss, "that is very much like what is called 'being in love.'"

"Very much, indeed," said Bertie, drily.

"But you do not mean to say that Nannie is in that condition as regards me?"

"I believe that if ever young woman was over head and ears in love with young man, she is that at this moment with you."

"Dear me," said Criss, "I never thought of such a thing."

"You don't seem over pleased at what any other man of your age would give his ears for," said Bertie, unconsciously repeating and recalling to Criss's memory almost the very words Nannie had used of herself in the Ariel.

"I suppose she is very beautiful," remarked Criss, as if he had never made up his mind on the subject.

"Not a man beholds her but declares that he never saw her equal, and that not for beauty of feature and form merely, but for the peculiar femininenes of her look and ways. One cannot fancy her other than always young and blithesome."

"And as good as her looks?" said Criss, interrogatively.

"I believe," answered Bertie, "that her nature is a force which she will find hard to control. Way it will have, but its direction will depend upon the circumstances in which she will be placed, and the people with whom she will have to deal. Indeed, the responsibility of supervising her is already become

more than I like to contemplate. Yet I cannot think of any change that would be for the better, excepting one. Only a husband can really influence her development and lot. Her whole nature throughout is genuine, rich, and untilled as a virgin soil; and like it, ready to bear a crop of good or evil, according to the will of the husbandman."

Here Bertie chuckled at his own unintended *double.*

"The strength of her character," he went on, "consists in her affections. She will abandon herself utterly to their dominion. Whatever she may do, whether in love or hate, will be done heartily. The man who marries her will be tied to no inert mass. Her intense vitality will not let her be ignored, or got accustomed to as a mere habit. But she will be an active element in his existence, whether for his happiness or his misery. There is no sameness about her. Reading my Shakespeare the other evening, when I came to his description of Cleopatra, as infinite in variety, and lovely in all, I was irresistibly reminded of the dear child. And I truly believe she needs only a return as genuine as that which she renders, to insure the happier fate."

"Well, Nannie, how is the head now?" said Criss, joining her in the garden. "I hope you like my house well enough to give me the pleasure of seeing you in it again soon."

"I like the house and everything about it so well, that if it belonged to me, I should not always be leaving it, as you do, for other places. But was it really a pleasure to you to see me in it? I hope it was, because I like nothing so much as giving you pleasure."

"My dear Nannie, while flitting about on the lawn and among the flowers, you looked like a fair young angel. And when you were nursing and singing to the child, you appeared such a bright and joyous creature, that it seemed as if nothing but brightness and happiness could ever come where you were. I really could not help thinking that if only that young fellow who has been so fortunate as to touch your fancy, had seen you yesterday, he could not long have remained obdurate.'

"What? whom do you mean!" cried Nannie.

"Am I not right in understanding your expression of a wish to return to Soudan, as an admission that there is some one there to whom you are attached? Well, now, coupling this with your liking for my house, I have been thinking that if the gentleman in question be really worthy of you, instead of your going back to Africa, I will send for him to England, and you shall have my house, or one just like it, for your own."

"But—but—" gasped Nannie, "I did not mean that I liked your house for itself. I liked it for your being in it. There is no one in Africa I care for. Oh! Criss, Criss, why did you save a poor girl's life only to tease her? I did hope you cared for me a little bit. But now you offer to give me up, and get rid of me altogether! I wish I had jumped overboard from the Ariel, and made an end at once. I should have been spared all this after."

"My dear Nannie, I thought I was showing that I cared, not a little, but a big bit, for you when I proposed to do all I could to make you happy."

"Care for me when you would give me to another! No, no, that is not caring. Caring means wanting all for oneself. It means love, and jealousy too, for no love is without that."

"If ever a woman were to care for me, Nannie, the last thing I should expect from her would be jealousy. I should not give her cause. Surely you are not of a jealous disposition? For jealousy and happiness cannot possibly exist together; and I am sure you would prefer to give happiness."

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed; "but I can be very naughty, sometimes; I know I can, and shall. But I know I can be very good and nice, too, at others, to make up. Why, do you know, I think it is partly because I am sure to be so naughty as to make him want sometimes to get rid of me, that I shall insist on my husband marrying me for altogether at once, when I do marry."

"I dislike the idea of limited liability marriages as much as you do," returned Criss; "but even other kinds are not absolutely irrevocable, you know. Good behavior is always

necessary, just as in other partnerships. But Nannie, it is not as a safeguard against a true and genuine nature that such release is permitted, but against falsehood and insincerity. And it is not in you to exhibit those."

"I like you to praise me," said Nannie, simply; "it helps me to be good."

"Tell me truly and seriously, Nannie. Do you think you would be perfectly contented and happy if you were to come and live altogether in my house, and take care of it as you do of Bertie's, and let me take care of you as my own dear little wife?"

Nannie uttered a sharp cry, and gasped out,—

"Do you mean it? Is it for real love of me, or only for pity?"

And without waiting for his answer, or rather, perhaps, reading it in his eyes, she fell in a swoon upon the floor of the arbor, in which they were sitting.

* * * * * * *

"I fear, Bertie, you must consent to lose the services of your fair housekeeper. Nannie declares that she likes my house better than yours, and has promised to come and keep it for me. I grant you that I have driven a hard bargain with her, for I have made her promise also to be my wife."

And the young pair stood before Bertie as before a father, to receive his congratulations and blessing, which were given in no niggardly fashion.

When Nannie, almost borne down with the weight of her happiness, had retired, he said to Criss,—

"Does she know all?"

"She knows nothing," he answered; "but takes me for myself."

CHAPTER IV.

Avenil was overjoyed. With work and a wife, he held Criss's sanity assured. The female part of his family was less pleased. Though kind to them as any brother, Criss had never manifested such preference for any of the girls as could justify expectation of a closer connection. Nevertheless, but for the intrusion of Nannie, there was no knowing what might not have happened.

However, no Avenil could entertain a petty feeling. They were of the sort of people who, if they err, err through strength, and not through weakness. It was probably the impression they produced, of having natures so strong and complete in themselves, that led to the comparative indifference with which they were regarded by the opposite sex. Ordinarily, women like to be wanted. But an Avenil man never gave a woman the impression that he had any need of her. And an Avenil woman was endowed with too robust a faculty of self-help, to suggest to men the idea of tenderness. They might and did contract alliances, which were productive of a considerable amount of solid, sensible happiness; but the passion of love came not near them. Between such love as they felt or inspired, and passion, was precisely the same interval, in kind and degree, as between talent and genius.

The two points the feminine part of the family mainly discussed now, were,—

Was Criss really and properly in love, and after what fashion? and, was Nannie "good enough" for him?

Certainly, Nannie was as great a contrast to them as could possibly be. They, so complete in themselves as to make the suggestion seem absurd that there was room about them for any complementary addition. She, so palpably incomplete, so unable to stand alone, so essentially complementary in her whole structure of character and form, and therefore in her unlikeness to men so suggestive of likeness and fitness—in a

word, so distinctively feminine—that men could not help being drawn towards her by the sheer necessity of their nature. Of course, Criss had made no such critical analysis either of Nannie, or of the feeling which impelled them towards each other. But he came to understand it all from experience; and the insight thus given him into the true nature of the relations of the sexes, was to him a further revelation than any he had previously attained concerning the fundamental nature and significance of the Universe. He learnt, too, what he had before but dimly apprehended, the truth of the old saying, that "Woman is not lesser man, but diverse," so that the more a woman is a woman, the less is she a man.

On one point the whole of the Avenils took the same view, and held it strongly. They thought that by marrying Nannie, in the first instance at least, by a contract of the first class, Criss was running a great and superfluous risk. To put it out of his power to get rid of her at his own will, they urged, was to hazard too much on an unknown chance. Even with people trained to civilization from infancy, and whose every thought and action were familiarly known, marriage was a lottery, owing to the impossibility of forecasting the influence it would have on the character of an individual. How much more so, then, in the case of one of whom nothing was known save that she was utterly undisciplined and self-willed.

Criss, however, would listen to no suggestion of the kind. He would give himself wholly, or not at all. He could not conceive of the fair creature he had so often saved, and whose whole heart was so evidently his, as making herself liable to repudiation for bad behavior. Neither did he think of her as one whose spirit could be subdued by any amount of liability. But, be she what she might, he had all faith in the power of the true and honest affection he should give her, to mould her into complete harmony with himself.

Intense as was the satisfaction which Criss derived from Nannie's unrestrained abandonment to the impulses of her emotional nature, in the direction of affection, the unexpected

difficulty he found soon after their marriage in making her comprehend that a man's nature possesses sides which do not come within the category of the emotions, at least, of that of love, involved him at times in no slight embarrassment. She could not, or would not understand that he could have duties which must occasionally take him from her side, or friendships which bore no rivalry to his love for her.

With her nature, so far as it went, Criss felt that he coincided entirely. But his nature extended far beyond hers in every direction. And at this she rebelled, for she could not see why it should be so. No small nature ever can see how narrow it is, intense though it may be within its own limits. Her dissatisfaction found vent in the cry—

"All of me wants you, and only a part of you wants me!"

Criss was sanguine, however, that under his loving tuition she would *grow*.

As time went on, her expressions of regret at his occasional absences took the form of strong opposition to all absence whatever. It was not enough for her that she always accompanied him when practicable. Neither was she content with burdening him with reproaches because he did not decline all business or other engagements which took him from her. She was jealous even of the engagements themselves.

"Why, Nannie darling," he said one day to her, in answer to her remonstrances, "what would become of you and your husband, supposing you had married a man who had to earn his living by working away from home?"

She evaded an answer by saying that Criss had no need to leave home to earn a living.

"But it is equally a duty," he pleaded, "for a man to fulfil his obligations in the world, whether he be rich or poor. The world would never get on otherwise."

"But I don't care for the world," she returned. "I only care for you. If you loved me properly, you would not care for anything beside me."

"Do you really mean that I do not love you properly?"

"You don't love me as I love you."

"You don't mean to say that you love me when you distress me, and try to humiliate me by persuading me to forfeit my self-respect?"

"How self-respect?"

"Why, by detaining me from duties I am in honor pledged to fulfil."

"Is it your duty to go where there are other women?"

"Sometimes."

"Well, that is what I cannot bear, that you should look at, or speak to, any other woman than myself."

"Do you know, Nannie, that the feeling you are describing is called by one of the ugliest names in language? We mentioned it once when talking together, before we were married, or engaged. Do you remember?"

"If you mean *jealousy*, I am jealous of you, and I am not ashamed to own it."

"You ought to have a better opinion of the power of your charms. But do you really think you have reason to be jealous?"

"Reason! I hate the word. Never talk to the woman you love, of reason!"

"Nannie, I must have an answer. Do you consider that I give you cause to be jealous of me?"

She was on the point of uttering an animated *yes*, but the unwonted sternness of his manner prompted her to change her *yes* to "No," and to accompany the negative with a pout, by which she intended to indicate that all she had said was in pure wilfulness, and that she wanted him to kiss her and be friends again. Her similar exhibitions on previous occasions had always terminated thus; but this time Criss thought it would minister to the happiness of both of them were he to postpone his coming round for a little while. So he said very gravely,—

"Nannie, love is impossible where there is no respect. To be jealous of me is to insult and outrage me. Never pretend to be so again, unless you can show me grounds for the accusation."

The pout faded from Nannie's lips, as with a frightened air she said,—

"You should not take so seriously what I said. I cannot conceal my feelings; and only wanted to show you how much I love you. I won't be naughty any more, I promise. I do not mean anything by what I said."

And then with all the sweet and womanly arts which instinct had taught her to perfection, she insisted on his petting and making much of her, and recapitulating all her charms—a theme of which she never tired—and she meanwhile was so soft and clinging, and withal so childlike and simple in her affectionateness, that he perforce admitted that, however naughty she might sometimes be, surely no one ever better repaid petting than his Nannie—*for a short time*—a qualification which brought out the pout that required so much kissing to reduce it.

In the hope of wearing out her craving for his exclusive companionship, Criss endeavored to accustom her to social intercourse with his friends at the Triangle and elsewhere. In this way he hoped to turn to good account her love of admiration, a love of which she made no affectation of concealment from him; for she often entertained him with her narratives of the effect she produced upon the men by her beauty, and upon the women by her skill in dress. Criss had a special reason for desiring to wean her in some degree from his own society. It was becoming necessary for him to revisit Soudan, and he dreaded the effect which the separation might produce upon her, unless she had the solace of some congenial companionship in his absence. There were very many reasons why he should not take her with him. In the occasional short aërial excursions he had of late taken her, she had shown an excitability which, to use the words of their physician, "it was not desirable to encourage." And the climate of the plains in which Criss's business lay, was too trying for Europeans. Besides, while absent he would be always on the move.

He hoped to attach her sufficiently to some of his friends to make her willing to receive them as visitors, and exercise

hospitality towards them in her home. But when he ran over the list, there was not a person in it against whom she did not raise an objection. And he soon learnt that to say a word in favor of any one else on any score whatever, was to find fault with her. The discovery that she was likely to become a mother filled him with joy, as much for the hope it gave him that her condition of mind was the result of her condition of body, and would pass away with it, or that, at any rate, her promotion to the dignity of parent would bring with it the needed maturity of character; as for the pleasure with which he could contemplate the blending of his own and Nannie's lineaments in their offspring.

There was ample time for him to make his visit to Soudan before Nannie was likely to be taken ill, and he cast about for some method of gaining her assent which should not arouse her excitability and opposition. "Could she only once see herself as she makes herself appear to me," he thought, "she surely would be cured."

A remark of her own respecting some theatrical performance she had lately witnessed, suggested the Stage as a possible agent in her education. Without letting her know he had a hand in it, he obtained for one of the periodical performances in the theatre of the Triangle, the selection of a very clever comedy, the purpose of which was to exhibit the sorrows of a man under the infliction of a jealous wife. It was one of the well-known series of educational dramas by which, through the consummate art of their construction, the highest moral teaching is conveyed without the audience being made aware that anything beyond mere amusement is designed.

To this Criss took Nannie, and so life-like and apt were some of the scenes, that he feared she would accuse him of a purpose in taking her, and perhaps in having a hand in the making of the play itself. But Nannie enjoyed it immensely, laughing heartily at all the points. And the only reflections she expressed afterwards were, as regarded the unhappy husband, that he was a fool to trouble himself about a woman who could behave in such a manner; and as regarded the wife, that she

did not deserve to have a husband at all, much less a good one who gave her no cause for jealousy. Of self-consciousness Nannie, to Criss's amazement and disappointment, exhibited not a particle: so utterly was she unaware that she had been gazing upon herself, as it were, in a mirror. And so completely was the lesson lost upon her, that she even remarked,—

"Oh, how I should hate myself if I thought I could be such a woman as that!"

Clearly self-knowledge and self-examination were neither forte nor foible of Nannie's; and it became a serious problem with Criss how to influence a nature so inaccessible to reproof. Perhaps by giving her credit for a virtue which she did not possess, he would be ministering to her acquisition of it. What if he sought to enlist her sympathies for some friend in difficulty or trouble?

An opportunity presented itself. He told Nannie that Bessie Avenil, after being united for some time to a man morally her superior, but physically and mentally her inferior, had resolved to dismiss him, on the ground that he did not come up to her idea of what a husband should be. And he appealed to Nannie as a woman of feeling, whether it would not be a friendly act to try and save Bessie from the remorse she would be sure to feel for having deserted one whom she had brought to love her, simply because, though thoroughly good, he was a somewhat feeble specimen of a man.

"What does she say for herself?" said Nannie.

"She says that when she married she was young and ignorant; but that now that she knows what a husband means, she intends to have a good one."

"There's sense in that," said Nannie.

"But not the tenderness or sympathy you would show for a husband who needed your consideration?"

"What does she say to that?"

"That sympathy is all very well, but that she prefers justice —justice to herself—and believes justice to oneself is the first of moral duties."

"And what do you want me to do?"

"It occurred to me that, before the final rupture takes place, you might get her here, and show her, by your own example, what an affectionate wife should be to a man."

"To a man who doesn't love her?"

"He does love her, utterly; only she is so full of life and health, that he cannot live at the same pace. You could teach her to hold herself in."

Nannie shook her head.

"He loves her so well," pursued Criss, "that he is ready, out of regard for her happiness, to sacrifice his own and relinquish her. You would have been touched by the tone of distress in which he told me how deeply he felt his own unworthiness, and inability properly to fulfil the position he held towards her. But he counted his happiness as nothing in comparison to hers."

"Have they any children?" asked Nannie.

"Only one; a girl."

"And what becomes of it if they separate?"

"If they separate for incompatibility merely, it will spend half its time with each parent alternately. Where there is a serious defect of character or conduct on one side, the law assigns the sole charge of the child to the other."

"It is just as I said," she exclaimed, after a brief pause. "He does not love her, or he would not give her up for anything. He isn't a man, and she isn't a woman; at least, not what I call a woman. If she was a woman, she would make him love her just as she wished, in spite of everything. I would, if it was me. I dare say she is not worth troubling about. What makes you take such an interest in her? Isn't one woman enough for you to be concerned with?"

"Too much, Nannie, if she requires me to abandon or neglect the friends of a life."

"If you were properly in love you would have no room for friends."

"Were I to be indifferent to the welfare of those who have always befriended me, I should be a base wretch, and unworthy of love. You don't mean what your words imply, Nannie

darling. I should be cruelly distressed if I thought you did. I should be forced to think you did not love me, or else that you were not worth loving, if I thought you did not care for my character, my honor, or my happiness."

"What do you want, then, with any woman besides me?"

"Have I not explained? Do you not understand the meaning of words?"

"I understand what you mean by *friends*, and I won't have it. *I* dont want any friends. Why should you?"

"Well, Nannie, I will say good morning to you for the present. I trust I shall find you in a different mood on my return. It was a great mistake of mine to appeal to your consideration for another when you have none for me."

She was silent until he reached and opened the door, and then she exclaimed—

"There's a man! pretends to love me, and goes away without a kiss!"

For the first time this appeal failed to arrest him. She darted after him, crying—

"Criss! Criss! how can you be so cruel to your poor Nannie, who loves you so?"

"Nannie," he said coldly, "I want to be loved in deeds as well as in words. If this passes your power, pray tell me so plainly."

Throwing her arms round him, and clinging to him with her whole lithe form, she exclaimed—

"Why, how can I better show that I love you than by being jealous of you?"

Making no response to her pressure, but speaking still in the same measured tone, he replied—

"Love and jealousy are two things wide asunder as the poles. Love means confidence, devotion, trust. Jealousy means self-love, and its indulgence is the worst form of selfishness; for it is a selfishness that takes the most pains to make others miserable."

"I am sure you are not miserable with me," she said, in one of her most winning ways. "No one ever said I was selfish before."

"Then do not force me to say it now. But endeavor, while I am gone, to think over the cause you have given me for pain, and resolve to be what I wish you in future."

"It's no use. I can't think of anything when you are away from me, besides you—and those women! Oh! I will be revenged on them!" she added, with a dangerous gleam in her eyes.

With a quick movement, and before she was aware of his intention, Criss had carried her back into the room, and deposited her on a sofa. Then, ringing the bell violently, he summoned a servant, and bade him hasten with all speed for the doctor. He then flung himself into a chair at a distance from her, and with knotted veins and heavy breathing, sat motionless, awaiting the doctor's arrival.

Nannie lay so still for several moments as to surprise him. Her hand was over her face. Presently he caught sight of her eyes glancing at him between her fingers. Seeing he was watching her, she said—

"Why have you sent for the doctor? Are you ill?"

The evidently affected unconsciousness of her tone gave Criss a keener pang than he had yet felt. Could it be that she was utterly heartless? He would ascertain by letting her suppose by his silence that he was ill.

Failing to obtain an answer, she began to cry.

"She does not care whether I am ill or not. She is thinking only of herself," was his inward commentary on this new phase. So he remained mute and took no notice of her tears. During this interval he changed his design. He had sent for the doctor, believing that Nannie's conduct could only be attributable to some temporary excitement of brain, which required to be allayed by medicine. Seeing that she was deliberately acting a part, he resolved on another expedient.

Nannie, on her part, finding her tears unheeded, judged it time to try some other means of attracting his attention.

"Criss! Criss!" she almost screamed, "I am crying, and you don't come to comfort me!"

Still no response.

"Criss! Criss! what do you want with the doctor? If it is for me, I won't see him! I don't want him to know how cruelly you treat me;" and then, seeing him still unmoved, she added—

"Or how naughty I have been."

The expression of pain on his face did not relax one jot, although Criss was beginning to suspect that her conduct was simply the result of a determination to make herself completely his master. He had commenced to give her a lesson for her good, and would not flinch from carrying it out, cost him what it might.

His prolonged silence was beginning really to alarm her when the doctor entered. Wondering what was coming, Nannie shrank into a corner of her sofa.

Criss rose, and having greeted the doctor with grave courtesy, said in a low and anxious tone, as if in the room of one stricken with alarming illness,—

"I wish, Dr. Markwell, to consult you respecting the effect likely to be produced on a child, by the mother's giving way during the period antecedent to its birth to violent and unreasonable tempers. Is its health of mind or body in any way dependent on her conduct? I wish you to speak without reserve, as I have the most serious motive for asking."

Looking from one to the other, and divining the situation, the doctor said that the effect would depend in a great measure upon the period concerned; and then in a low tone he put sundry questions to Criss. Having got his answer, he looked very grave, and said, aloud,—

"It is the most sacred of a mother's duties to repress, not merely all violence of demeanor, and everything that may excite her, during the period in question; but also every thought and disposition which she does not wish to see shared by her offspring. A neglect of duty in regard to the former may result in the production of idiots or cripples. But even this is not the greatest misfortune which can befall a family. The worst unhappiness comes from the depraved and ungoverned characters which are apt to be engendered by a neglect of the latter duty."

"Have you anything in the shape of a sedative that you can recommend to my wife? She has become liable of late to accessions of excitement, which cause me much anxiety both for her own health and that of her unborn child."

"Doctor!" cried Nannie from her hiding-place in the sofa cushions. "I won't take anything but poison. Send me some poison, and I shall be grateful to you. Oh, my father! my father! why did you give me such a wicked disposition!"

"You see, doctor, that she needs your care, and that more than is possible while you are under different roofs. Now I have a proposition to make to, or rather a favor to ask of you. I am obliged, much against my wish, to be absent from home for a space of probably three or four weeks. Will you either allow my wife to dwell with you, under the care of yourself and Mrs. Markwell, or will you transport yourself and your whole family hither, and take care of Nannie during my absence?"

This speech brought Nannie into full possession of her faculties. It was the first time that Criss had spoken of his absence as an event near at hand. She sat up and gazed wildly at him with an expression full of agony and apprehension.

This demeanor was not lost upon Criss. Regarding it as one of the artifices by which she sought to establish her sway over him, and convinced of the absolute necessity, if they were ever to be happy together, of exhibiting the futility of her endeavor, he continued his address to the doctor.

"I am sanguine, doctor, of the good results which will flow from my temporary absence. The paroxysms which cause me so much anxiety and alarm, have steadily increased in frequency, duration, and intensity, until they threaten permanently to impair her constitution, physical as well as mental. So bad have they become, that even should my absence have no good effect, it at least can do no harm. I need not tell you how great will be my gratitude should the kind care and professional skill of yourself and your wife be the means of restoring to my beloved wife the health, and to both of us the happiness, which this terrible malady has so wofully impaired." And Criss's voice faltered as he spoke.

The doctor began saying that he and his wife would gladly do all in their power to bring about so desirable a result, and he would leave it to her and Mrs. Carol to decide which of the two plans proposed would be most convenient and agreeable. But Nannie interrupted him, declaring that she would have nothing of the kind; that she hated medical women, who knew all a woman's little weaknesses by their own; and that if Criss chose to go away and leave her, she would follow him. She knew by her own experience, how ready he was to pick up women and carry them about in his Ariel; and she was not going to give him the chance of doing so while she was his wife.

Criss could not help feeling a certain sensation of amusement at the unexpected and ingenious perversity of this new attack. But he said to the doctor,—

"You see, doctor, for yourself what a task you will be undertaking. It is clear that it will never do for you to have her in your own house. These high walls are the only safe asylum. I intend, when you have transferred your family hither, to instruct my servants to take their orders from you alone. You will thus be able to control the movements of your patient."

"It shall be as you wish. May I ask when you propose to take your departure?"

"So soon as you are installed here. I have, out of consideration for my wife, already delayed it too long. The sooner I go, the sooner I shall return. I wish to spend the last month before her confinement with her. Of course, if you report her state to be such that my presence will be prejudicial, I will delay my return."

"You call yourselves men," exclaimed Nannie, "and you conspire to drive a poor woman mad."

"On the contrary," said Criss, "we conspire—do we not, doctor?—to keep a poor woman sane, who by yielding to wanton tempers is driving herself mad. We conspire, too, on behalf of the unborn, as well as of the living."

The renewal of this suggestion made Nannie once more hide

her face in the cushions, and sob. Presently a voice came from the depths, saying, in a subdued tone—

"Tell me when the doctor is gone. I want to speak to you."

Criss whispered a few sentences to the doctor, and dismissed him. He then seated himself beside Nannie on the sofa, and awaited her pleasure.

Presently she looked up, and finding herself alone with Criss, said—

"You don't know how to treat a woman. You will never conquer me in that way. Such a fuss to make about my loving you well enough to be jealous of you, and not like your leaving me! Why, I have done nothing, absolutely nothing. Mattie, my sister, was ten times worse than ever I have been. I have seen her strike him, and pull his hair out by handfuls. And Frank didn't make half the fuss you have made over a few words said by poor little me."

"Poor Frank, what a happy release the plague must have brought to him."

"Not a bit of it. He was very happy with Mattie."

"There is no accounting for tastes. He must have been very differently constituted from me."

"He understood women——"

"Women! yes. But not furies and maniacs."

"Women who are not logs, like the tame creatures who pass for women here. Poor Frank! he loved Mattie properly, and was very happy with her in consequence."

"I wish I knew his prescription."

"It was a very simple one."

"Tell me."

"It cut all her naughtiness short, and made her good for a long time together."

"What was it?"

"I—I—can't tell you."

"Do."

Nannie covered her face with her plump white arm, and bending her head a little downwards, looked with coy shyness

at Criss through the angle of her elbow. Presently the magic words came falteringly forth, and she said, speaking in the smallest of voices—

"He beat her!"

Criss turned away with the impatient air of one who has been tricked; but Nannie exclaimed—

"He did; I assure you he did. It is the only way with women like us. We must fear the man we love, to be good to him. If he had not beat her, she would have made him as unhappy as—as I have made you. And she was the happier for it too!"

"Am I to infer, then, that you wish me to follow his example?"

"I often think I should behave better if you were to beat me, and make me afraid to be naughty. Not with the fist or a stick you know, but a little thin whip, or switch, which only hurts without doing any injury. Oh, I have often and often seen Frank trying to kiss away the red wales from Mattie's lovely skin, while the tears were running down both their faces. Oh, they never were so happy as then."

"I expect my wife to be a reasonable being, and influenced by other considerations than those of bodily chastisement. Has affection no influence upon you? Are you not amenable to a fear of unhappiness, as well as of physical pain—my unhappiness as well as your own?"

"You speak to a woman as if she were a man, and open to reason! I tell you a woman who loves is not a reasonable being, and you must not deal with her as one."

"A man who loves shrinks from making her he loves unhappy."

"Then why do you make me so?"

"I do not make you so. You make yourself so by indulging baseless fancies."

"Baseless! when you speak to other women!"

"Well, we will see what our medical friends can do for your disease. I give it up."

"Oh, don't let them come and live here. If you must go

away, let me stay here by myself. I will try to be good—I will indeed. And you mustn't be angry with your Nannie for loving you too well."

CHAPTER V.

The vast works in progress in Soudan were exciting widespread attention and interest. Already had the Empire of the African Plateau made such an advance in importance and civilization, that the probability of its early admission into the Confederacy of Nations was everywhere allowed. Such promotion as this was beyond the dreams of the previous sovereigns of Soudan, and the people were elated beyond measure at the prospect. Not only would such admission be a recognition of their claim to rank among civilized communities, but it would be worth a large percentage in the money markets of the world. Could Criss and the Emperor secure this admission, they would gain for the country an advantage greater than that which they had in vain sought from the Stock Exchange of Jerusalem. Even the people of Soudan now saw the impolicy of their once proposed repudiation.

Of course, as in every partially civilized community, there were people whose vested interests were opposed to the new state of things, and who thought that their interests ought to be paramount. In order to be recognized as sufficiently civilized to be admitted to the Confederation, it is indispensable that the candidate-nation prove itself amenable to the ordinary processes of reason in its various public departments, and that all parts of its system be consistent with each other. Thus, there is no chance of entrance for a people whose institutions rest avowedly on a basis of mere tradition. For the civilized world has learnt by experience that experience is the only trustworthy basis of stability, whether in public policy, religion, or morals. For instance, to have a national church, or not to have

one, is in the view of the Elective Council of the Confederation a matter of indifference; but the existence of a Church, or of any other public institution, resting avowedly upon a traditional or dogmatic basis, is fatal to the chances of the claimant.

Not only was Soudan at this time inadmissible on the ground of its having a national church of this kind, but it carried its defiance of logic and consistency to so incredible an extent as to maintain two national institutions, directly opposed to each other, both in principle and in practice. For, in its National schools, which were derived from the Mahommedan period of the country, it gave an education which consisted, as with us, in the cultivation of the intelligence and moral sense of the children; while in its National Church, which dated from the change to Christianity, and owed its existence to the personal influence of the royal house of Abyssinia, it denounced the human mind and conscience as delusive and pernicious, and claimed the assent of all to a theory of the Universe and system of theology which failed utterly to commend themselves to those faculties. Thus, at this time Soudan was in the category of what the Council is accustomed to schedule as *Lunatic* Nations, inasmuch as it had no settled principle of action, and pulled down on one side all that it upheld on the other.

Enlightened by Criss, it was now the Emperor's ambition to remove this stigma, by placing the national preacher in accord with the national schoolmaster. His pride revolted against the notion of his being regarded by the highest civilizations in the world as but a Sovereign of fools. And pride, Criss found to his regret, was the leading motive to which his cousin was amenable. Next to pride, and obstinacy on behalf of his own way, came the sentiment of affection for his cousin. In the conflict between these feelings, Criss not unfrequently found himself compelled to appeal to his pride in order to turn the balance in the desired direction. It was by acting on this motive that the native combativeness of the young ruler had finally been enlisted on behalf of radical reform. Having once resolved to win the approbation of Europe by abolishing the absurd incongruity between the preacher and the teacher, the

very hostility of the vested interests, which fattened upon the existing system, served to strengthen his purpose. To this end he listened eagerly to all that his cousin had to say on the subject.

Educated under the impression that the Priest was the natural and indispensable sustainer of the Crown, he was surprised, as well as delighted, at the array of incontrovertible evidences whereby Criss showed him that the Priest has never supported anything save for his own ends, and that the whole history of priesthoods, of whatever age, country, or religion, shows those bodies to be, by their very nature and constitution, utterly and irredeemably selfish, making their own aggrandisement, individually or corporately, the one object and aim of their policy. Criss wound up his homily on this occasion by saying,—

"Ah, if they had only striven for man's regeneration here, with but a fraction of the persistency with which they have invoked the hereafter! But, as it is, there is no cruel or degrading superstition, from the belief in demons and witchcraft, to that in human sacrifices and eternal torture, that they have not fostered and turned to their own account. I repeat but a trite historical truth when I say that the priest, as priest, is both enemy of man and libeller of God; and that the throne which has such a foundation can only be that of a tyrant. This, so far as the people are concerned. With regard to the ruler, it is the least secure of bases. For the very theory of Ecclesiasticism is subversive of all civil government. In order to be the ruler and redeemer of your people, you must begin by effacing every vestige of sacerdotalism from the public institutions of the country. Of course, privately, people may hold and teach what they please. But the State can recognize and support only what is consistent with the equal liberty of all and its own supremacy; and no ecclesiastical system is that."

"But my own throne," interrupted the Emperor, "what becomes then of my divine right? They have always upheld that."

"Divine right," replied Criss, "is but a dogma. Real right

has no need of dogma. If use and experience do not justify your throne's existence, no authority of dogma will do so, and the sooner it is subverted the better. But the fact is, where a church is supreme, neither sovereign nor people can be free. It is never content until it has subjugated the souls and bodies of men. Such is the nature, avowed or concealed, of all priesthoods."

"When you urge me to take up a position in antagonism to the priesthood, do you not mean the church?"

"That is the very confusion that nearly cost England her own church. No, the priest is but an official of the church, and like any other official, is apt to forget that he exists, not for his own benefit, but as servant of the whole body. Keep the official under as strict control as may be necessary to secure the efficiency of his department. But the department itself, that is the church, must neither be destroyed nor cast adrift from the State. In the first place, it has a vitality that makes its destruction impossible, for it has its roots originally in the aspirations of human nature towards a higher life than that of the field, the factory, and the laboratory. In the second place, if cast adrift from the tempering influences of the State and the lay power, it will grow up in the hands of its officials to be a very Upas to the State. A free church in a free State is an impossibility, especially where the church is possessed of overwhelming wealth, prestige and power. You might as well try to imagine a free army in a free State. No, the State alone can make and keep the church free from any servitude to which it is really liable, namely, that which arises from the dominion of dogma, or the arrogance of an hierarchy. We have proved all this long ago in England, so that your task is a simple one. You have but to make your church in reality what it is in name,—National. And this you can only do by releasing it from all limitations upon opinion and expression, and allowing any man of proved education and capacity to minister in it, unfettered by tradition. Your church will then be the fitting crown to your schools and universities; and the whole national part of the educational apparatus of the country will be of a

piece throughout, for it will have its bases in the human mind and conscience, and its apex in the sky, with God and idealized Humanity."

"But what," asked the Emperor, "am I to reply to my clergy when they make reproachful appeal to me to know what will become of the truths of religion when their teaching is no longer compulsory?"

"Say," replied Criss, "precisely what becomes of the truths of science when unshackled by foregone conclusions. They will have free course and be glorified. Religion will cease to be a worship of the dead, and become the apotheosis of the living, the actual. Whatever is good and useful and necessary, can be shown to be so by evidence, without aid from dogma. We want no authority beyond that of evidence to make us hold that the earth goes round the sun. Indeed, until men abandoned authoritative tradition on that subject, they believed a falsehood. No, the bases of that which is good, useful, and true, must be perpetually verifiable, otherwise it ceases to be good, useful, and true."

"But surely a national church implies a national religion?"

"By no means. There can be no such thing as a national religion, any more than a national set of truths or facts, or a national system of medicine, science, or art. There may, and should be, a national institution for educating the faculties which are devoted to such ends, and for extending such education, as only a national institution can do, to every corner of the land; but the phrase 'national religion' involves as great an absurdity as the phrase 'national God.'"

"My clergy will have a good deal to unlearn," remarked the Emperor.

"So had ours. Yet they did it. But those who care for Humanity and Truth will not mind that."

The Emperor shook his head.

"Vested interests are strong and selfish," he said. "I can do a good deal to make it worth their while, but I shall have a nest of hornets about me."

CHAPTER VI.

It was mainly the activity of the "nest of hornets" alluded to by the Emperor, that made Criss's presence in Soudan indispensable. The physical curse of the country might be dealt with by deputy. Its moral curse must be dealt with in person. The superstition of its people rendered the prolonged absence of their sovereign's good genius, as Criss was popularly called, a hindrance to the designs in progress for their own benefit. The clergy, seeing their cherished system of thought, or rather no thought, menaced, denounced the physical improvements, commenced or projected, as constituting an impious interference with the Divine Will. Such a notion could be met only by the diffusion of a knowledge of sound reasoning. In conjunction with some of the more advanced citizens, Criss set to work to found a propagandist agency for this purpose. Taking for its motto, *Free Enquiry and Free Expression*, this institution had for its function the publication and distribution in myriads of short pithy papers, exposing the absurdities of the popular superstitions. I happen to have the originals of some of these papers by me, in Criss's own handwriting. It may be not amiss to reproduce one or two of them here, if only to illustrate the mental condition of a people placed by the Confederate Council in the schedule of Lunacy. The following seems to have been levelled at the objection just referred to as raised by the priests:

"The Divine Will.

"According to the priests of Soudan, a will that can be thwarted by man. According to common-sense and the dictionaries, the Supreme Will. People of Soudan, require of your priests that they be careful of their definitions."

Another, also in his own hand, was in answer to the reproach of Atheism brought against the new school. It ran thus:

"PEOPLE OF SOUDAN.

"Be not frightened by names. There is no Atheist, save he who disbelieves in cause and effect. To believe in a cause of all things, is to believe in a God. Respecting the nature of that cause, it is not only lawful but necessary to differ until determined by positive evidence derived from a due comprehension of its effects, that is, of Nature. The real Atheists now-a-days are those who would banish God from the living present to a dead past."

And this also:

"SCIENCE; WHAT IS IT?

"Sound knowledge, obtained by accurate observation of carefully ascertained facts. To reject the scientific method for any other, is to reject fact for fancy, truth for falsehood."

Hunting up the records of our own country at a corresponding period of its history, Criss founded also an agency called, *The Church of Soudan Nationalization Society,* in exact imitation of the famous organization which played so important a part in promoting the Emancipation. In the prospectus which he wrote for the chief organ of this society, a high-class weekly, also named after its British prototype, Criss showed the Soudanese how alone they could emulate the example of the England they so greatly admired. "The course of all modern civilization," he said in this manifesto, "is from a point at which human life is entirely subordinated to tradition and authority derived from a remote past, to a point at which the sole appeal is to the cultivated intelligence and moral sense of the living generations of men. Desirous of traversing that course, as England has done, let us not be discouraged by its difficulties. It is true it took England several centuries to make the journey. But then she had to do it by herself and in faith, for she had no example before her to encourage her. It is not so with us. The whole civilized world, backed by the experience of the ages, is on our side. The *Reformation,* the

name whereby this course was known, released England from the domination of that ancient enemy of human freedom, Rome, some four hundred years before she detached herself from the domination of Dogma, which was of Rome. This achieved, the glorious *Reformation* bloomed and bore its fruits in the more glorious *Emancipation*. The path has been shown us; we need not be long in traversing it."

The clergy of Soudan, in their alarm at the new movement, sought to strike at its promoters through the neighboring peoples. Divining that the Emperor's design of regenerating the plateau involved the redemption of the Sahara, they set to work to stir up the desert tribes, the people of Fezzan, and those bordering on the Mediterranean, by asserting that it was the intention of the Emperor, under European influence, to destroy their commerce and power by bringing in the sea to drown them out. The trigonometrical survey they denounced as an invention of the Evil One, and liable to be visited with a retribution such as that which had followed the census of David; and Africa was still so dark a continent, intellectually, despite its superabundance of physical sunlight, as to make the idea terrible to the multitude.

Such was the position when Criss tore himself from Nannie, whom he had in vain endeavored to interest in his work, to make his first post-nuptial visit to Africa. Occupied as he had been with his domestic affairs, and inexpressibly shocked and bewildered by the unexpected development in his wife of a passion which he could neither comprehend nor moderate, he yet had not allowed himself to be idle, and in much of his work he found Avenil an admirable helper. Not in his missionary zeal for the direct spiritual enlightenment of the Soudanese:—there Avenil had no sympathy, ascribing it to the Semitic element in his blood. But he gladly encouraged his Teutonic tendencies, and directed all the consultations of his engineers and draughtsmen. One portion of Criss's work consisted in the construction of pictorial representations of the Africa of the future—Africa as he hoped to make it—no longer blasted and

cursed by its own sunshine, but with its Sahara turned into a smiling garden, or a summer sea. Criss's pictorial designs had already done wonders, and it now remained only to conciliate the dwellers in the Oases, the most superstitiously attached of mortals to their green homes. Sooner, it was said, would an Arab give up his hope of heaven, than part with his beloved oasis, the birth-place, dwelling-place, and final resting-place, alike of himself and his ancestors. The provinces on the coast hailed with delight a scheme that, if successful, would reverse the geological decree which attached them to Africa, and restore them virtually to Europe, as well as relieve them of the miseries inflicted by the desert blasts; and which, even if unsuccessful, would do them no harm. All along the coast, from the low-lying Gulf of Cabes, from the Gulf of Sidra, and almost up to Egypt itself, came offers of territory through which to cut the canals by which the Mediterranean was to flow into the desert, and a communication maintained between the two seas. Almost up to Egypt. There the tone was different. Egypt would not hear of such an experiment. She not only placed her veto upon it, but stirred up the Arabs inhabiting the Libyan Oases, the most depressed portions of the Sahara, to resist it with all their might. This action of Egypt was accounted by the Emperor of Soudan an additional cause for the enmity he cherished in his heart, but kept secret from his cousin.

As the vast design got wind, all Europe and Asia Minor became interested in it, and the students of science eagerly fought over their conflicting theories respecting the probabilities and consequences of success. The Geologists, whatever their theories on these points, were to a man enthusiastic on behalf of the experiment. They even afforded useful aid to the project by exhibiting to the astonished Arabs the fossil remains of fishes, which they found in the Sahara, proving that it was the sea-bed of an evaporated ocean of the Tertiary period, and therefore possibly designed by Providence again to become a sea. The Geologists did service also by suggesting the probability of there being under-ground reservoirs of fresh water

permeating the limestone bed of the Sahara. Where else could all the water which annually inundated the plateau go to? And if this was the case, doubtless it was from this inexhaustible source that the Oases were fed. What then would be easier or better than to enlarge the apertures and let more of this water flow through to the surface? Indeed, it might thus be a fresh instead of a salt sea, that the Sahara would become.

Avenil and Criss discussed this together. They came to the conclusion that it was probable, that on making an extensive vertical boring into the Sahara, the first flow of water would be fresh, and might continue so for some time. But that, ultimately, the sea which was at present kept out by the fresh water, would fill in the limestone cavities, and flow through into the Sahara. Should it only come through in sufficient quantity to counteract the loss by evaporation, the problem of turning the desert into a sea would be solved, and that without cutting a canal.

They communicated the notion to the Emperor, who was hereditary chief over a small oasis, which lay close below the plateau, considerably to the east of Lake Tchad, and therefore far towards Egypt. He caught at the suggestion, and having purchased the rights of all the dwellers on the oasis, and removed them to an estate at a distance, he sent a strong force of laborers, with powerful excavating machinery, and set them to work to bore for water on a large scale.

The result of the experiment was satisfactory beyond expectation, considering that the spot selected was by no means one of the lowest parts of the desert. The water, thus far perfectly fresh and pure, came through in such abundance, that the whole oasis was flooded, and continued to be so, as well as the surrounding desert for a considerable distance, until the sands and the sun prevailed to prevent its further spread.

Students of Science, other than geologists, concerned themselves with the doings in the Sahara. These were the Meteorologists; especially the Meteorologists of Switzerland. "In the

glacial period," said they, "Switzerland was an iceberg. From the summit of the Alps to beyond the Jura, it was buried beneath the chilling pressure of an enormous mass of ice, bearing on its surface giant rocks. The great desert of the Sahara was still overflowed by the waves of the sea; its burning sands not yet exposed so as to produce that glowing wind which, now-a-days, after traversing the Mediterranean, melts away the winter snows on the Alps, as if by magic, and converts Switzerland into a blooming country."

"To restore the sea to the Sahara," exclaimed the savants, "is to bring back the glacial period to Switzerland. It is to ruin the climate of Europe."

The question was an immense one. With the climate of Europe would go the civilization of Europe. The world would have existed in vain. Every scientific coterie on the face of the globe was absorbed in the problem. It was one of the "long results of time," that International politics became a question of Meteorology. This was something gained in the long and weary pilgrimage of Humanity. But what would Alexander, Julius Cæsar, or Napoleon Bonaparte have thought of such a controversy between nations?

Criss, as was his wont, had recourse to Avenil. Avenil had enjoyed the discussion, but held the fears to be groundless. In the first place, said he, the sea will be a very shallow and a very warm one, and the bed has been raised so high, that probably one-half will not be submerged. Of this, however, we shall be better able to judge when the survey is completed. But there is another reason. The greatest cold of Europe comes with the North-east Trades from Polar Russia. These winds are aggravated, if not entirely caused, by the heat of North Africa. Cool Africa, and you mitigate, not increase, the rigor of the climate of Europe.

The states bordering on the Sahara took another view of the question. "What," they asked, "is the climate of Europe to us? We have a right to escape from being roasted in our own ountry, if we can."

The determination taken by Criss was to make the experi-

ment, as an experiment to be abandoned in the event of success proving pernicious. There would be no difficulty about this.

In spite of the opposition of Egypt—an opposition offered on purely selfish grounds—Criss succeeded in purchasing the most eligible portion of the country bordering on the Mediterranean for his purpose. It lay between Tripoli and Egypt, and contained a region depressed nearly two hundred feet below the sea.

The spot where the excavation was to commence was from one to two hundred miles inland. Here, and at numerous points along the route, was collected an army of laborers, with excavating machinery of gigantic power, and a vast array of appliances for the task. The plan was to cut a deep broad channel in the solid limestone bed of the desert to the sea, maintaining the same depth throughout, so as to make way for an enormous body of water to enter at once. Thus only, it was held, would the loss by evaporation be supplied. Notwithstanding the efforts brought to bear upon it, the works would occupy several years.

To Criss's perplexity, the Emperor did not enter so heartily into this portion of the scheme. Taking a line of his own, he pretended that he disliked the idea of an open junction with the Mediterranean, by which hostile, and rival trading vessels would be enabled to traverse the inland sea up to the very borders of his country. He might be a match, he said, for his African rivals, but could not compete with the whole world. Rather than have an open channel, he would prefer to bring the sea in through a series of enormous siphons. It was only that he might conciliate the nations of the Confederacy, and secure his own admission into it, that he would consent to Criss's scheme.

Criss felt that the Emperor had not given the real grounds of his objection, and urged him further.

The Emperor then said that he was convinced that no single channel could supply the Sahara, and that he thought that tunnels might be driven with advantage, and at far less cost, into the sea at various points round the coast, so as to make

sure of the water reaching any isolated portion of the low lands. He proposed to attach in this way both the Atlantic and the Red Sea. A tunnel through the limestone ranges of Abyssinia would not only bring in water from a greater height than at any other point—for the earth's configuration and motion, and the influence of the winds and tides, were such as to keep the Red Sea at a higher level than any other on the African coast—but it would afford a cheap and convenient mode of transit for heavy produce to an Abyssinian port. At any rate, he had set his heart upon making the attempt, and should do his best to carry out the latter portion of the project at once, whilst Criss was operating in the direction of the Mediterranean. He had already consulted with his ministers, as well as with the savants and imperial engineers, and their report had secured the co-operation of the principal capitalists of Soudan. He concluded by challenging Criss to a race, to see who would first bring the water in, himself from the Red Sea, or Criss from the Mediterranean.

CHAPTER VII.

Criss's life was indeed a full one. While engaged in the regeneration, moral and physical, of a continent, his own heart was perpetually torn asunder between the two characters alternately enacted by his wife Nannie.

Two characters, different as those of two women. The one, so ineffably lovely and loving, winning and kind, in the ecstasy of her ardent nature abandoning herself wholly to her love, and in the perfection of her adaptation making Criss feel indeed that if ever woman was made for man, Nannie must have been made expressly for him.

The other, the result of abandonment, not to love, but to feelings which converted love itself into a curse. Nannie knew and felt that Criss loved her wholly, solely, and truly; but,

unaccustomed as she had ever been to exercise the slightest control over herself, she now gave herself up to the dominion of her fancies, until, although knowing, and in her calmer moments admitting them to be but fancies, they became for her more than all facts; more even than all convictions, which to the female mind are too apt to be far more than facts.

These fancies all took one shape. She understood love only as a monopoly. Her lover was unfaithful to her if he had friendships, interests, thoughts, occupations, in which she was not all in all. So far from her love leading her to take an interest in whatever interested him, it led her at first to exhibit indifference to, and then vehemently abuse, every object, event, or person unconnected with her, that he chanced to mention. Slowly and sadly he found himself driven to a resolution never to allude in her presence to any subject whatever, save herself. Even his own life-long friends were not spared, though she was never tired of vaunting her own early associations.

Criss alone saw her under the influence of this side of her character. In society her brightness and vivacity won immense admiration, and admiration was a thing which she loved too dearly to forfeit by an exhibition of ill-temper. While the self-control thus manifested abroad led Criss to hope the best for her sanity, he found no consolation in ascribing her outrageous conduct at home to a deliberate disregard for him and his happiness. One of the traits which struck him as most curious, was the utter indifference she showed to her promises of reformation, and this only a little while after she had uttered them with such exhibition of deep repentant sorrow as to win his forgiveness, and make him hope that this was really the last time.

But though none of his friends as yet were cognizant of his domestic history, they could not fail to remark that he withdrew more and more from their society, and that when he did appear, he had little of the serenity and cheerfulness which had been wont to characterize him. Criss had a good and tried friend in his neighbor, Dr. Markwell, a physician of high repute, and married to a medical lady whom also he highly

esteemed. But it was only by stealth and rarely that he ventured to consult them. He feared to excite Nannie's suspiciousness and jealousy against even her physician. For the doctor to be able to influence her, he must retain her confidence. It was thus that when they met in Nannie's presence, he affected to give but a qualified assent to whatever Criss said.

An astute investigator of the maladies of mankind, Dr. Markwell, while assuring Nannie that it lay with herself to determine her own fate, whether for weal or woe, inasmuch as it is to a very great extent in the power of an individual to promote or resist insanity;—while, too, he gave Criss hope that her mind might be beneficially distracted from its fatal preoccupation by the advent of offspring, yet in his own mind feared the worst.

He did not, however, consider it his duty altogether to conceal from Criss the nature of his fears. Having had much experience in prisons, and observed the effect produced upon the female constitution by the absence of a habit of control whether by self or by another, he told Criss how that when once a young woman has discovered her power to produce an hysterical paroxysm at will, she is liable to exercise it for her own gratification, without regard to the distress she may cause to others; and that, the habit once induced, her own mental and moral nature is at the mercy of it, and madness in one of its many forms frequently supervenes.

"It was precisely such a condition of mental intoxication," he continued, "that in former times it was the ambition of the religious fanatics of various countries to produce in themselves or their converts. From the ecstatic utterances of a pagan sibyl, to the hysterical convulsions of a Christian revivalist, the condition and its character were the same. It was only when the law sternly forbade fanatics, who mistook their own ignorance of physiology for inspiration, to propagate madness—as it before had forbidden pretended sorcerers to trade upon credulity—that our own country was finally freed from the disgrace of such scenes. Woman's nature, however, remains the same. Its emotional side requires to be counterbalanced by the most

carefully developed reason,—reason of her own, or reason of man. If it is not good for man to be alone, ten thousand times less is it good for woman to be alone, or uncontrolled by a strong hand. There are cases in which kindness to her is but unkindness;—in which the sense of duty needs the stimulus of fear to keep it up to the mark."

This last observation reminded Criss of Nannie's strange utterances respecting her sister, and the regime of physical correction on which she insisted. He mentioned it, and, in reply to the doctor's commentary, said, smiling sadly,—

"Well, doctor, if my wife does not mend until I beat her, I fear she must continue to behave ill until the end of the chapter."

"Ah, that is because you have a theory which bears no relation to experience," returned the doctor. "Forgive me for saying it, but it seems to me self-evident that if, in order to spare your own feelings, or in deference to a supposed principle, you abstain from the course best calculated to benefit her, you are acting selfishly instead of benevolently, and following dogma rather than experience."

"How like a speech of Avenil's!" exclaimed Criss.

"You must understand," continued the doctor, "that there is among women of undeveloped intellect, when they have done wrong, a certain craving for chastisement, growing out of a rudimentary sense of justice. When a man sees that he has made a mistake, he manifests his repentance by resolving not to repeat it. Not so a woman. Half the power of priests over women in old times consisted in their habit of hearing their confessions and imposing penances. The husband is the successor of the priest. He must listen sympathetically to his wife's confessions, and assign the appropriate penance, or inflict the appropriate penalty. The less she is able to govern herself, the more he must govern her. For lack of the husband, it should be the doctor. But I really consider that the man who compels himself to be harsh to the woman he loves, solely for her own good, performs the loftiest act of self-renunciation possible to a finite being. Of course, I do not prescribe ex-

treme measures at the very outset. I mean only that, kindness having failed, the treatment must be changed for one of apparent harshness. Your wife, for instance, declares that she goes wild with misery the moment you go out of her sight. Suppose, then, that you exercise her in the art of self-control by allowancing her, and making the amount of time you pass with her dependent on her success in repressing that feeling. She might be induced to cut a paroxysm short if she knew that her indulgence in it would deprive her of your society for the next four-and-twenty hours or more."

"Are the constitutional differences between the sexes so radical and extreme?" asked Criss.

"They are, indeed. I do not mean to say, however, that man is never as foolish and irrational as ever woman can be. It is possible that at times he can beat her in that, as in most other things; but when a man is so, it is in spite of his sex, and when a woman is so, it is owing to her sex——"

"All the more cause for extra tenderness and patience, then," interrupted Criss; but the doctor went on without heeding.

"The history of woman's efforts to reverse Nature's decree is one of the most curious in the world. Ridiculed by Aristophanes, there are not wanting some to return to the charge even now, that is, in less advanced countries. Here, our women have long ago learnt to recognize the fact, and to make the best of it without striving to alter it. But it was only after the men had consented to their making the attempt, and so demonstrating their limitations by experience, that they settled finally into their own place. I confess, as a medical man, I cannot see how any woman that was wife and mother, ever so mistook her own nature."

In one respect Criss followed the doctor's advice. He ceased to go through the form of consulting or affecting to please Nannie, in any arrangements he was obliged to make. He simply said "Nannie, I shall be absent for so many hours, or days." And when she broke into angry reproaches,—"Nannie, you are taking the very means to lengthen my absence. I have not now for the first time to assure you that the more you

keep this temper under, the more I shall be with you, and the happier we shall be."

The birth of a child served to restore hope and happiness to both husband and wife. Criss had looked forward to this event with intense eagerness, believing that all depended upon it. With such a *fact* ever present to her, Nannie surely would not now indulge in fancies.

It was a girl—as Nannie ardently desired—but she was not quite reconciled to her being called Zöe, after the mother whom Criss had never seen. It made her jealous of that mother.

Nannie had borne Criss's absence in Africa far better than the scene at his departure had suffered him to hope. Doctress Markwell had read her rightly when she said to Criss,—

"Take courage. Without you at hand to be distressed at fancies, she will not care to indulge them. She has not reached the stage at which she would take delight in tormenting herself without your being a sharer. I hope she never may."

It took some time after his return for the old fancies to show themselves. And then Zöe arrived opportunely to allay Criss's reviving anxiety. With the child came all joy and forgetfulness of past troubles,—such utter forgetfulness on Nannie's part of her own extravagances of behavior, as to kindle in Criss a new apprehension. But, refusing to entertain it, he gave himself up to the delights of the situation. This new idea was that Nannie, though supremely endowed as a woman, was devoid of that essential element of humanity, recognized by him under the name of *Soul*. He could not otherwise account for her utter lack of self-consciousness or sense of responsibility for past conduct. The child bid fair to resemble its mother, save in one respect. It had its father's eyes. Surely, then, his Zöe at least would have a soul!

Nannie made an admirable mother, as she had always boasted she would. The pride she took in her infant, and consequent eagerness to exhibit it to visitors, led Criss to hope that she had got the better of another weakness,—namely, her aversion to all society save that of himself.

In short, so conformable was Nannie to all requirements of

propriety, health, and motherly perfection, that Criss began to think that the painful scenes of altercation and violence which had made him so wretched must have been but an ugly dream, or at worst but a spasmodic throe of nature over the production of a first-born.

The doctor owned himself surprised at the completeness of the change; but he was too well habituated to note the distinction between the functional and the radical to express himself sanguinely about its permanence. He knew the instinctive liability of young mothers to use their infants as a weapon of coercion against the timid and doting father. "Thwart and irritate me, and your child suffers in consequence," was a dictum he had too often known uttered or signified in pursuance of an utterly irrational demand.

Fully impressed with the belief that Nannie's malady had resulted from physical causes, Criss trusted, by keeping her beyond the influence of those causes, to prevent a recurrence of the malady. He was so happy now in his own and Nannie's happiness in the society of their infant, that it seemed to him an act of wantonness to do aught that might endanger its continuance.

Nannie thought differently. She longed to multiply her triumphs in the newly-won domain of maternity, and scoffed at the notion of her being less robust in constitution than any other of her sex. She even ascribed to coldness and indifference to her pleasure the tender, self-denying care with which Criss sought to shield her from aught that might excite and injure her. In short she manifested all the symptoms of a relapse into the old sad state.

Entreating her to be calm, he sought, by pleading the danger to their child and their own happiness, to win her consent to a regime that might prevent a return of the illness which had already caused them so much misery.

"Illness! What illness?" she asked.

"You know all that we went through together, darling, before our little one was born," he said. "Well, that was entirely

the result of your delicacy of constitution. I love this present happiness too well to risk a return of that evil time."

"I don't know what you are talking about," she returned. "I was not ill. I was only jealous, as I had a right to be; and as I shall be again unless—unless— Oh, dear Criss! you must not say or imagine such things. Think what will become of baby, if you upset me, and make me ill with such talk!"

"Ah, if you knew how terrible has been my anxiety, you would not urge me to act against my better judgment."

"A fig for better judgment! You mean that you no longer care for me, or you would let me have my own way in everything."

"Why, Nannie, what an actress you would have made. You said and looked that speech to perfection."

"I was not acting; I meant it."

"Well, do not excite yourself, I entreat. Trust to me to do what is best. My precious wife does not know everything that is in the world, or even in her own constitution, though I acknowledge her to be a wonderful little woman. Some day, perhaps, when you are quite, quite strong, and I have talked to Doctor, and you to Doctress Markwell, we can do numbers of things which would be dangerous to you now. I love my Nannie far too well to run the chance of losing her, especially by an imprudence that can so easily be avoided."

"I know best, without consulting any doctors," she exclaimed. "I believe you are in league with them against me. They always say just what you want them to." And she broke into a fit of that hysterical sobbing of which Criss had so lively a recollection and dread.

He had learnt by experience that to attempt to coax her out of those fits by soft speeches, was as great a mistake as to seek to appease a spoilt child by giving it everything it cries for. Resuming, therefore, once again the stern tone and aspect which he had hoped were done with forever, he said,—

"Very well, Nannie; if you can act thus now, it is ample proof that you are unfit for the liberty which you desire. I intend to regard your power of self-control as my index to the state of your health."

"I care for nothing of that sort! I am master now! Look here," she cried excitedly, and holding the child aloft in her arms; "do you see this? This makes me master; and I mean to have my own way in everything, or you and your child will be the worse." And she glared almost maniacally upon him.

By a movement too sudden for her to thwart, he snatched the child from her, for he really feared for its safety. Then summoning the nurse, he said,—

"Take the child into your own room, and do your best with it there until the arrival of the wet-nurse, who will be here to-morrow." And he placed his arm around Nannie, to keep her from rushing after the child.

After two or three vain attempts to escape, she sank back into her sofa, moaning and sobbing.

When they were alone he said,—

"Now take this sedative, and sleep yourself good again. And whenever you find the naughty fit coming over you, remember that even with the child, I am still master, and intend to be so."

"I want my child," she moaned, piteously.

"Not because you love it," returned Criss.

"I do love it. It is the only thing I love, now that I hate you."

And is it because you love it, that you insist upon making yourself so ill that you could not nurse it without making it ill likewise? Ah, Nannie, dear, you have yet to learn what real love means,—even the love of a mother for her infant."

He prevailed at last, and she took the draught, declaring that she only did so on condition that she should have the child back in the morning. He did not accede to the condition, but the night's rest took such good effect, that the doctor found no reason to forbid the child returning to her. He complimented Criss on the wet-nurse, saying it was a master-stroke, and would doubtless bear repetition if necessary. As for Nannie, she was so terrified by it, that several days passed before she again ventured to assert her own will in opposition to Criss's. Her first utterance to him in respect to the occurrence of that night was,—

"It ought to show you how perfect a woman you have got for a wife, when I gave up my own will for the sake of my child."

Criss was not aware that she had done so, but thought it was rather for her own sake; but he did not care to contradict her on a mere matter of opinion. And happiness was restored, for she forebore for the present to renew the controversy which had caused the interruption to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Criss endeavored to compensate for his absence from the scene of his operations in Africa, by the constancy of his intercourse by telegraph. One room in his house was set apart as his study, and one part of this study was occupied by a telegraphic apparatus, and wires which communicated with all the principal centres of his interest. Thus, he had his own private wire to Avenil's study; another to Bertie's cottage; one to the Triangle; another to his banker's; and he had also engaged the exclusive use of one to Africa, with branches to Bornou and the works in the desert. In this room he sat, and conducted his various correspondence, arrangements being made to give notice, by means of signals in other parts of the house, when his attention was required in the telegraph room. As his library was also here, and the walls were covered with maps and drawings, as the shelves with books, Criss, as he sat there, was surrounded by the whole world of the past and present, while he busied himself about that of the future.

In his care for the remote, whether in time or in space, the near was not forgotten, and poverty and sickness which, in spite of all the advances made by civilization, will still occasionally thrust their ugly heads into view, found in him an ever ready and sympathetic alleviator. In the early days of his married life, he had hoped to interest Nannie in some of his

local charities, but had been compelled to give up the idea. She could scold people for being bad managers, and by something more direct than implication, praise herself; but her sympathies seemed incapable of the extension necessary to constitute charity. As she could not with any advantage accompany Criss on his rounds, and resented his absences, he had gradually withdrawn in a great measure from making them, leaving his work to be done by deputy—an office gladly undertaken by the benevolent Bertie.

Of Criss's wealth, and the employment it gave him, Nannie had long been jealous; but now her jealousy extended itself to his home occupations, which he carried on in his study. Not that she was excluded from this apartment, for Criss delighted in being able to glance from his work to her, as she sat on the soft carpet playing with the little Zöe; but, unluckily, it occurred to her one day, that he could not be thinking entirely of her while occupied about other matters.

"Please explain, Nannie," he said one day, on her persisting in reproaching him for his engrossment. "Please explain exactly what it is you wish of me; for I am really at my wits' end to understand. Is it that you wish me to cease to be a man, engaged in work worthy of a man, and to become a woman, with thoughts for nothing but love?"

"Yes," said Nannie, stoutly. "I want you to think of nothing but me,—and little Zöe; but not much of her, or you will make me jealous of my own child."

"Nannie, there was once a poet who wrote to his lady-love:

> "'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more.'

What do you think of the sentiment?"

"I should have been jealous of 'honor.'"

"You mean *for* honor, for *his* honor."

"No, I don't. I mean what I said."

"There was another poet, who described a wife of whom her husband was so fond, that he could not tear himself from her side to fulfil the duties to which he was in honor bound. One

night he awoke from his sleep to find her sitting up and murmuring, as she reflected over the career and character he was losing for her sake,—

"'Ah me, I fear me I am no true wife.'

Would you like to be regarded by your husband as being 'no true wife,' when you seek to detain him from his duties?"

"I should have liked that man," she said. "He loved his wife as a woman ought to be loved. He would have owned me to be true woman, if not true wife."

At this moment Criss's attention was called off by the sounding of the telegraph signal. Before he was aware what she was about, Nannie had snatched a heavy ruler from the table, and rushing to the apparatus, with a tremendous blow smashed it to pieces.

"There!" she exclaimed, to Criss. "You may think yourself fortunate it was not your head. It may come to that yet, for your treatment of me."

Criss had learnt the futility of bandying words with her when such a mood was on her. Fearing for the safety of the child, he placed himself between her and it, and summoned the nurse.

"Go at once to Dr. Markwell's," he said, when the nurse arrived, "and give my compliments to him and Mrs. Markwell, and say that I shall be much obliged by their allowing you and the child to stay there until some other arrangement can be made."

"And when am I to see it again?" asked Nannie, as the nurse disappeared, and Criss closed the door after her.

"Well," he said, with simulated indifference, "I should think a week or two will probably see you over this attack. It will be time enough to think about it then."

And he set himself to examine the mischief done to his apparatus.

"I shall go after my child," exclaimed Nannie, darting towards the door.

"You cannot leave the room. I fastened the door as I let the nurse out. Your violence suggested the precaution."

"I won't stay in the house to be outraged."

"No one wishes you to do so. But you do not leave it until you are in your right mind, and then desire to do so. It depends entirely on yourself when that may be."

"Do you consider me mad, then?"

"You force me to wish sometimes that I did."

"To wish that I was mad?"

"Yes; I should then be able to account for your behavior. I would rather have you mad than bad, heart-broken as it would make me."

"What does the doctor say about me?"

"He thinks that whatever you may be at present, you are endeavoring to drive yourself into insanity."

"Is that Mrs. Markwell's opinion, too?"

"She says you are no more mad than she is."

"What, then, does she ascribe my conduct to?"

"Uncontrolled wilfulness and inordinate vanity."

"Nothing else?"

"Not that I know of."

"She is right, so far; but she omits the principal cause."

"May I know it?"

"You do know it. I have told you often."

"Tell me again."

"Love for you."

"Love for me makes you pain and distress me by such conduct!"

"I can't help it."

"Nannie, answer truly. Do you try?"

"I have no time, when my feelings move me. You don't know what it is to have feelings."

"I know what it is to have feelings for others. You make me fear that yours are only for yourself. Are you the happier when you have given way to what you call your feelings, and made me wretched, and yourself ill and ugly with passion, and driven your child away—"

"Ugly! me ugly!" And she ran to a mirror, and took a rapid look at herself; and then, finding the survey satisfactory,

she rushed close up to Criss, and gazed with the most exquisite, winning look imaginable, into his face, and in a pleading tone asked,—

"Am I really ugly, Criss dear? I don't think I am. Do you?" and putting her arms round him she clasped him tightly to her.

"Is it then because you believe no man can resist you, that you act in such a way?" he enquired. "Believe me, Nannie, even you may try your power too far. You have done much to prove to me that even my patience is limited."

"Why, what would you do?"

"Set you and myself free from a tie that has become a bondage."

"Yes, I know that is what you want. But I won't let you. I would murder her, and you, and myself, too."

"Her! your child?"

"No, no, the woman you want to get free from me for."

"Oh, I see. You prefer that we should continue to be miserable together, than be happy apart."

"You don't deny, then, that there is a woman for whom you wish to give me up. I thought you had some motive for trying to kill me by your unkindness."

"Why should you give me credit for acting from motives, when you deny doing so yourself?"

"Why should you care about other women when you have me?"

"It seems to give you great pleasure to think that I do so."

"I think it because you can't help liking women. You like me too well not to like women."

"Oh; and so you would behave better to me if I was less agreeable to you as a husband!"

"Yes; it comes so natural to you to be nice with me, that I cannot help thinking you must have learnt it with others."

"I see. I shall have to imitate the example of the knight who always clad himself in his armor before caressing his wife, for fear she should find the process too agreeable."

"I know what men are. You don't deceive me when you pre-

tend to be thinking only of my good. You will send me out of my mind by it, and then you will be sorry." And she began to cry.

"There is one thing, Nannie, that you have never yet got properly into your understanding:—that I took you to be, not my master, but my mistress. So long as you strive to be both, you shall be neither. That is positive and certain. You have but to choose."

"May I choose now?"

"If you please."

"I—don't—want—to be your—master."

"You declare it faithfully, and will not try, in future?"

"Yes," she said, in a low penitent voice, gazing down while she spoke, and taking the measure of her own exquisite little foot, as, protruded from beneath her dress, it lay close along side of his.

He was silent awhile, pondering the propriety of giving her another trial, but feeling that she had not yet really repented of her recent outrageous behavior.

Finding that he did not speak, she said, coaxingly,—

"And you will let baby come back?"

"Certainly, the moment you give me reason to feel sure you will continue to be good."

"I am good now."

"For how long?"

"Until I am provoked again."

"That won't do. The child shall stay away altogether, rather than grow up to have its character ruined by witnessing an evil example set it by its mother."

"You will not rob my child of its mother!" she exclaimed wildly.

"On the contrary. I wish to save you to your child."

"Are my promises nothing?" she inquired.

"You are as well able to judge of that as I am. How have you kept them hitherto?"

She hung her head, conscious that she had used words as counters, to be put aside as worthless as soon as her game was played.

"I shan't know what to do all day without my baby," she murmured.

"Yes, we shall miss it dreadfully," he remarked.

"You won't care," returned Nannie.

"Well, not so much as you, because I can go and see it occasionally."

"So can I," said Nannie, "I shall go now."

"That is quite out of the question."

"Why?"

"Because I have given orders to the contrary."

"What do you mean?"

"Nannie, I had a most terrible shock one day, not long ago. I overheard, when out walking, some people talking about us. One said to the other, 'How is it one sees Mr. Carol about so little now?' I dread to tell you the answer; but it may do you good to know the impression you have produced in the neighborhood."

"I am not afraid, what was it?"

"'Oh, poor fellow, he is afraid to leave his mad wife.'"

"I don't believe a word of it," said Nannie. "It is nothing but a story you have made up to excuse yourself for going about without me."

"So far from that being the case, it is the greatest disappointment to me to find you object so to every thing I have to do, and every person I have to see, that I am compelled to leave you at home. But where do you imagine that I want to go without you?"

"I know."

"Will you not enlighten me? Of course, I should not have told you of that conversation if I considered you mad."

"It is no matter what you consider me. You like the society of other people. That is enough for me."

"But not in the same way that I like your society. Life has many kinds of pleasures and engrossments, besides love; which, by operating as distractions, serve to perpetuate and intensify love. Foremost among them are the charities and amenities of social intercourse, friendship, and intellectual converse. I take

as much delight in these as ever; but I have withdrawn from them all, in the interests of your happiness."

"And quite right too. It only makes you despise me for my ignorance when you go among what you call intellectual people. As for friends, I don't see what you want with them, when you have got a wife."

"Nannie, I expected to find you untaught; but I did not expect to find you unteachable."

"Then you are disappointed in me?"

"It is in your power to prevent my being so."

"If you loved me as you ought, you would think me perfect. But you can't, when you are always thinking of some other—some *intellectual*—woman." (She uttered the word with a sneering emphasis.) "Oh, you need not deny it. You won't convince me. I *know* it is true, because I dreamt it! Don't laugh at me! I won't be laughed at by you, oh, you cruel, cruel man!" she added, on seeing the smile evoked by her last speech.

"Why, Nannie, it is the greatest compliment one can pay to a comedian when he has uttered a good thing well, to laugh heartily. I shall make a note of that, 'I *know* it is true, because I dreamt it,' and get some dramatic friend to put it into a play. An actress who can say it exactly as you did, will be sure to bring the house down. But I really must bring this conversation to an end for the present, as I must go and see how poor Bertie is."

"Bertie! what is the matter with him?"

"He was taken very ill in the night, and had to send for a doctor."

"Why don't you telegraph instead of going?"

"You have put it out of my power."

"How?"

"I had already been conversing with him about himself by telegraph. It was the sounding of his signal that excited you to destroy the apparatus. By my not replying, he will be thinking that I have gone out, probably to see him."

"Is this true?" she exclaimed.

"I know you have never understood my character," he replied; "but I did not think you had so utterly misunderstood it as to suppose me capable of falsehood."

"I know what I know," she said, with a menacing air that was anything but reassuring to Criss. And then with a sudden change of demeanor, added, "But Criss dear, I must go and nurse dear Bertie. I can be such a good nurse. You will be so proud of your little wife when you see her in a sick room. Why did you not tell me at once, and then all this trouble would have been saved?"

"I was about to tell you when it occurred, in the hope that you would make the proposal you have just made."

"Well then, come quick, and let us go to him at once. Shall I ring for the carriage?"

"I will do that, while you are putting something on," replied Criss, utterly at a loss to find the key-note to a character that seemed determined to baffle him. He could liken Nannie only to a musical instrument, that is perfect in all respects, save for one note which obstinately refuses to be tuned into harmony, but so jars whenever and however it is touched, as to produce the most frightful discord. Only in Nannie's case, unhappily, the false note seemed to have the faculty of spontaneous utterance, so that it was impossible to avoid being tortured by it.

CHAPTER IX.

Bertie's illness was sharp, but by the evening the symptoms were so much alleviated, that there was no excuse for Criss and Nannie to remain with him through the night. In her conduct in the sick room, Nannie had shown a tact and readiness which delighted Criss; and on their way home he spoke in such a way as to show her that he was pleased, but without implying that he was surprised. Nannie's demeanor during the drive each way, caused him some perplexity. On the way to Bertie's her

lips were set, as if under the influence of alarm and apprehension. On her return she spoke only in monosyllables, as if his remarks interrupted a train of thoughts altogether unconnected with their recent experience. On reaching home she ran into the house without a word, and hurried upstairs, evidently longing to indulge her feelings by herself.

Anxiously watching, Criss heard a scream, which, however, did not sound to him like one of distress. In another moment Nannie had run down to him, with the baby in her arms, exclaiming triumphantly,—

"I have got her back! I have got her back!"

"Yes, so I see. Can you explain it?" he asked with a smile.

"No," she said, and her face fell, as if feeling less sure that she had cause for exultation.

"Bring baby into the study, and I will tell you."

"No, no, not in that room, I can't go in there. In here."

"Nannie, darling, I was so pleased by your readiness to go and nurse Bertie, that I sent for the child back to meet you on your return, as a reward."

For a moment Nannie looked as if she was on the point of bursting into tears. Then, with a manifest effort, she restrained them, and after two or three fluctuations of resolve, said, as if to herself,—

"No, I won't. I won't be so weak. He shan't think he has conquered me. Criss, you were taken in. It wasn't goodness a bit that made me want to go to Bertie. I didn't believe your story about his being ill. I thought it was an excuse to go and see some woman. I determined to outwit you by going with you. And now I have got my child back, without being good." And she laughed a wild hysterical laugh.

"Well, Nannie," he said soothingly, "now that you see for yourself how groundless your fancies are, I hope we shall have an easy time of it for the future."

But Nannie had made up her mind not to come round just yet. So she busied herself about the child, tossing and singing to it, and took no notice of his remarks.

Before he could speak again, the telegraph signal in the adjoining room uttered its alarum. On hearing it, Nannie turned very red, and the more so because she felt that Criss saw the change in her color. With a faltering voice she said,—

"I thought it was broken."

"It has been repaired in our absence," said Criss. "There are too many poor fellows depending for their bread on my punctuality, for that to be left broken."

And he went to see what messages had arrived while he was out, leaving Nannie with the child to recover at leisure.

Before retiring for the night, Nannie sat beside Criss on a sofa, her equanimity perfectly restored.

"I wish," she said, as she played with his hand, twisting her lovely hair around it, "I wish you did not expect me to be so good. I am sure I should be better, if I wasn't expected to be so. It wouldn't make you bad, being expected to be bad; why then should I be made good by being expected?"

"Perhaps it would help you to be good if I were to break out occasionally into a fit like one of yours."

"Oh yes, that it would. Do! do do it!"

"Well, it did occur to me to-day that it was a good opportunity to follow the example of a person I once heard of, who went to take charge of a lunatic. The patient was subject to attacks of violence, in which he would fling about the room and smash whatever was handy to him. Well, the first time he did this before his new keeper, who was a woman of great nerve and resolution, she at once seized sundry articles of furniture, and dashed them to the ground, with precisely the same outcries and gesticulations which he had used."

Nannie laughed gleefully. "Oh, how I should like to have seen that!" she cried. "But what did he do then?"

"He gazed at her in astonishment, and at length asked her what she did that for. She replied that, seeing him do it, she supposed it was the way of the place, and the right thing for her to do. The story goes that he thereupon looked exceedingly foolish, and never after broke out so again."

"And why didn't you smash the things in your study this morning, too, if you thought it might cure me?"

"I believe my principal reason was that it was my study. Had it been one of your rooms now, with all your pretty things about it, I probably should have done a little smashing."

After a pause she said,—

"I am thinking, Criss dear, that you ought never to have married at all."

"Well, Nannie, we live and learn."

"I mean that you are too perfect by half in yourself. No woman can put up with absolute goodness. There is not sufficient of the machine about us. Our feelings can't stand it. They will have relaxation. It is as bad for us to live with a person who is perfect, as for a child to live only with grown up folks. I should be sorry if little Zöe has no one beside you and me to play with. We shall be quite old then, and she will want the companionship of other children. They learn so much from each other that all the schools and grown up people in the world can't teach them. She is almost six months old now. She will be so dull without any brother or sister for a companion." And the sad prospect wrung a little sob from Nannie's affectionate heart.

Her melancholy forebodings were happily doomed to disappointment. Zöe was scarcely eighteen months old when the desired playfellow made its appearance in the form of a little boy.

CHAPTER X.

THANKS to a careful selection of agents and organization of work, the gigantic operations which Criss was carrying on in the desert, proceeded rapidly and steadily without requiring more than an occasional brief visit from him. In the same

way, the work of freeing thought throughout Soudan from the chains of superstition, made progress in spite of the vested interests. When the Emperor had come thoroughly to comprehend the real significance of the claim set up by the priesthood to be superior to the civil government, he had given his countenance to the societies which Criss had created for the spread of popular enlightenment. The battle was virtually won when once the people comprehended that, whatever the object of enquiry, there is but one method—the scientific; inasmuch as it signifies merely accuracy both in observation of facts and deduction of inferences; so that to reject the scientific for any other method, is simply to reject accuracy for inaccuracy.

It was thus that the fictions of so-called history, and the inventions of superstition gradually lost all importance in their eyes, and became but as certain fossil specimens to the geologist, tokens of a lower stage in the earth's development. Students and curiosity-mongers may concern themselves about such things, but they enter not into the lives of those who judge all matters by the criterion of the present.

Talking over these things one day, the Emperor expressed to Criss his surprise that with all his zeal for the enlightenment of the people, he had not attacked the divinity of the Sacred Talisman. "Surely," said the young monarch, "if I am to be a reforming king, and, to use your own phrase, 'of a piece throughout,' I ought openly to discard a superstitious basis for the crown which now affects to justify its existence by Use."

Criss acknowledged that he had thought much on this very point, and believing that the symptoms would disappear as the disease was cured, had judged it best to commence at the other end. "Let us," he said, "be content with gradually developing the intelligence of the people, and they will of themselves then successively shed one superstition after another. Knowledge is the sole proper disturber of faith. No use to extinguish the candle before letting in the sunshine. When once they have knowledge, they will perceive of their own accord that the Sacred Talisman derives all its real value from its intrinsic worth

and beauty, and that any mystic addition serves to diminish rather than enhance its lustre."

It was thus that the spirit of Emancipated Europe crossed the Sahara into Soudan, and conquered the chief, if not the last stronghold of superstition remaining in the world. The people and their sovereign understood each other and the unity of their interests, and thenceforth all opposition was vain. The national school, national universities, and national church of Soudan, became the three steps in the ladder of the national development; the appeal in all being to man's present and mature, instead of to his past and rudimentary. Thus, too, did Europe repay to Africa the debt owed for Africa's contribution to the early civilization of the world; and the greater debt owed for the world's after treatment of Africa. Once a slave-hunting ground for all men, Africa was now free in mind as well as in body, and its very soil was being redeemed as from an hereditary curse.

If ever the earth had been, as theologians were wont to declare, morally insolvent, and capable of rehabilitation only by a vast act of grace, it was now proving, by its conduct in Africa, that it had only suspended payment, not become utterly bankrupt; that, give it time, and it would pay all.

This last was a train of thought which had been communicated to Criss's mind during one of those flights into the Empyrean which had made the chief delight of his life as a bachelor. It is only because man is impatient with God's slow method of working, that he denounces Nature as a bankrupt, who has failed to fulfil his proper engagements to the great Creditor, and thus fallen short of the end of his being. We, who can contemplate such lives as some which have sprung from the earth—yea, even such a life as this I am now too imperfectly narrating—may well hold that, were there no other like it, no other approaching it for purity, goodness, and usefulness, one such life is sufficient to redeem the earth from the charge of being utterly reprobate and fallen, from the condemnation of

having existed in vain, and incurred a sentence of wrath for having failed to fulfil the end of its being; sufficient, therefore, to reconcile its Maker to it:—just as one magnificent blossom suffices to redeem the plant that lives a hundred years, and flowers but once, from the charge of having wasted its existence. Even if the experience of all past ages of apparent aimlessness and sterility afford no plea in justification of existence, the one fact, that there is room for hope in the future, may well suffice to avert the sentence men are too apt to pronounce,—that all is vanity and vexation, and that the tree of Humanity is fit only to be cut down, that it cumber the ground no longer.

With the intellectual emancipation of Soudan, the need of social regeneration became apparent. Here, however, Criss found less readiness to follow an European lead than in other respects. Neither the women were eager to demand, nor the men ready to concede a change in the relations of the sexes, little content though they both were with the existing state of things. A little enquiry showed him that they had never yet learnt to see the essential distinction between social and political equality. The women, too, had been taught, by a comparatively recent event in a neighboring State, to see the absurdity of their claiming to be legislators at all, when they could be so only upon sufferance, and must at all times be incapable of enforcing their decrees. And the men had taken advantage of the occurrence to laugh to scorn all demands for a change which seemed to involve anything approaching to identity of function in public more than in domestic life.

The occurrence in question was as follows:—

Several generations ago, a large district on the west coast of Africa was governed by a succession of despotic sovereigns, whose sole idea of religion and political economy was to appease the gods, and keep down the surplus population, by the periodical celebration of human sacrifices on an enormous scale. For a long time the victims of these Kings of Dahomey (an appellation apparently derived from the Latin *da homines,*

"give me men," supposed to be addressed to the king by his god) were selected by the merest caprice. But, as civilization extended to those regions, and the sentiments of men there became softened by the study of philanthropy and art, unmeaning caprice gave place to a system of natural selection, whereby all the crippled and imperfect specimens of the population were periodically chosen to be offered up. The effect of this weeding out of the inferior types was to produce a race of men and women as superior to ordinary folks as the "pedigree" cereals, for which the hills of our own marine southern suburb were once so famous, were superior to ordinary produce. The men and women were all beautiful, good, and clever; and never had been known such handsome negroes and negresses.

But as man improved, the gods came worse off; and the priests complained that, owing to there being no imperfect specimens left, the supply of victims for their sacrifices was running short. There was danger, they declared, of some terrible judgment befalling the nation, through the neglect of the public ordinances of religion.

Upon hearing this the King, after holding consultation with the priests, determined upon making a new ecclesiastical canon. By this it was ordered that the selections for sacrifice should be made among the shortest of his subjects, male and female. He trusted thereby both to satisfy the gods, and raise the average stature of his people.

The people, however, after the first sacrifice or two, determined no longer to submit to such a state of things. They were wearied of the exactions of the priests, and disposed to think that a deity who could derive gratification from human sacrifices, could not be of much account anyhow. They had also imbibed certain revolutionary notions unfavorable to monarchy. So one day they rose in a mass, abolished the dynasty, disendowed the church, and established a republic.

So high was the standard of female excellence, that there was no question about women having, under the new regime, an equal share of political power with men. They had it as a matter of course, and with laudable assiduity did they apply themselves to

the practice of parliamentary and forensic eloquence. So earnest were they in the discharge of their public duties, that the men gradually withdrew from public life altogether, as a thing best adapted to women, and occupied themselves with ordinary affairs in the field, the factory, the market, and the home; until every public office was held by women, even the police and the army consisting exclusively of that sex.

Things went along smoothly and well until certain states-women of Dahomey, smitten by propagandist zeal, endeavored to undermine the institutions of their neighbors, on the ground of their unwomanly character. The Emperor of Soudan, whose dominions reached from the Red Sea to the Niger, had long been anxious to extend his rule to the Atlantic sea-board. The main obstacle to his ambition was the prosperous and easy-going community of Dahomey. The intrigues of its states-women among his own people supplied him with a pretext for invading it; while the knowledge that it was defended only by an army of women, made it seem to him as inviting an attack. He determined therefore to reduce it to submission, and compel it to acknowledge the authority which, in virtue of his well-known descent from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, he claimed over all the adjacent regions.

On the approach of the Imperial army, the women of Dahomey prepared to march out to battle. The men, concerned at the idea of danger to their women, offered to go in their places, saying that whatever legislation and police might be, fighting a foreign foe who was really in earnest, was a serious matter.

But the women scornfully rejected their proffered aid, bade them stay at home and look after their children and business, and then marched boldly forth to meet the enemy.

No sooner had they departed than the men met in council. They knew how it would be, and that no time must be lost. It was necessary, however, that their women should receive a lesson. A battle, and therefore a reverse, could not take place for a day or two. So, having armed and formed themselves into divisions, they started after it was dark to occupy the hills

which overlooked the plain where the battle was expected to take place, keeping their movements absolutely secret from the army of women.

On the enemy coming in sight, the women with much show of determination, and really making a most gallant appearance, advanced to meet him. The combat was short and sanguinary, that is, to one side, the side of the unhappy Dahomey damsels. Their courage, unsupported by strength, proved to be vain. The Imperial levies, though consisting of a race far inferior in physique, were yet men. They, therefore, could not, under any circumstances, suffer themselves to be defeated by women; while the women felt, though they did not own it until afterwards, already half beaten through the influence of their own hereditarily-acquired impressions of man's prowess. They were soon in full flight over the plain; and as they fled, the visions of their homes, containing their children and the husbands they had left to tend them, rose before them; and with the army beaten and the enemy advancing, they saw nothing but ruin and slavery for all they loved, or ought to love.

The unhappy fugitives were not suffered long to indulge these bitter reflections. The sounds of battle were renewed. The tramp of a host came near. Whither now shall they flee? Home! How can they face their homes, thus humiliated after all their vauntings?

"What is this? No enemy! but our own—dear—men!! Oh, save us! save and forgive!"

"All right, all right, lassies"—(they had a few Scotch words in their vernacular. Many of them were literally "Bonny lassies," for they belonged to the province of Bonny, a little to the eastward of their great river; and were not the *Camaroon* mountains, towering thirteen thousand feet high, almost in sight, a name palpably of Scotch origin?)—"all right, lassies," exclaimed thousands of manly voices, as thousands of muscular arms were clasped round thousands of delicate ebony necks. "We knew how it would be, and took precautions accordingly. You would go; but we determined you should not be beaten too badly. So we placed ourselves where we could see the

battle, and directly you ran away and the enemy gave chase, we pounced upon him and cut him to pieces. So now you can come home, and resume your functions legislative and protective, without fear of further molestation."

The women were glad enough to go home, but from that day forward they steadily declined to undertake functions which, through lack of physical strength, they could only fulfil by sufferance. It was the remembrance of this incident that mainly operated to retard the introduction of the European system into Central Africa. America, too, had contributed an example in dissuasion. For the women of the province of New England, in an access of religious fervor, had taken advantage of their being in a majority at the polls, to create a Popedom of Boston, and elected one of their own sex to the office, and in virtue of the ancient and intellectual supremacy of their city, claimed for her spiritual supremacy over the whole continent. It was only by taking possession of the polls by force and reversing the decree, that the men put an end to the absurdity. Thenceforth they have restricted the suffrage to themselves.

Thus, in addition to Criss's other labors on behalf of his African protégés, he undertook to make them comprehend the natural law which seems to assign to men a monopoly of the sphere of politics and legislation, and to restrict women to the social and industrial sphere; inasmuch as the former is based on force, and the latter on convenience,—a difference of function for which nature, and not man, is responsible.

CHAPTER XI.

Since his marriage, Criss had held no intercourse with his spiritual friends. The tenor of his life was inconsistent with reverie. His mind was too much engrossed by his labors or his troubles. On his journeys, which were made with the utmost

rapidity, he had things concrete to occupy his thoughts; and ascents for mere abstract contemplation were apt to excite Nannie's jealousy. She was jealous even of the angels, and without waiting for cause given, was ever ready to utter the imperious prohibition, "Thou shalt have no other goddess but me."

Hovering one day in the Ariel over his garden, Criss could see as he gazed downwards, the smooth green sward and embowering trees, and the fair dwelling, and Nannie, the embodiment of all his dreams of loveliness, and Zöe, the fruit of his love for her; the whole forming together a scene of exquisite delight. But the joy with which he contemplated it was instantly dashed by the thought of the serpent which had thrown its coils around it, and converted what should be his home of happiness into his place of torture.

Then recurred to him the vision of his friend the tall angel, and the sweet bride-angel, Nannie's prototype; and he wondered whether their experiences had any counterpart in his own; and, if not, in what consisted the secret of their happiness. And as he thus pondered, by a scarcely conscious impulse he drove his car with rapid motion far up into his old ground, the Empyrean. "Tell me, tell me," his heart cried as he ascended, "oh ye blessed ones of the skies, what is the secret of your bliss?"

It was not long before his yearning evoked a reply. The old ecstatic condition in which thought became transfused into realities, came back upon him with undiminished intensity,—and, presently, to his spiritual vision became revealed the well-remembered noble form and serene countenance, and with it the sweet and sunny face of the fair bride, looking, oh, so like Nannie, but Nannie in her softest moods, that Criss could not forbear exclaiming,—

"Soul of my Nannie! canst thou not shed upon her while on earth some of the sweet repose and confidence which thou enjoyest in heaven? Ye look on me with the same joyous aspect as of old. Surely ye cannot be aware of the sadness which darkens my life?"

"We know all," replied the tall angel, "and knowing all, we are glad, even though thou sorrowest. Thy struggles and thy patience are not without their reward, even though they continue to the end. Know that the task before thee is harder than any that is given to us. This is thy badge of honor. It is for thee to prove thyself worthy of it. Listen to the revelation of the mystery. Thou and she are products of the same earth, but of different stages in that earth's development, thou of the later and highest, she of the earlier and lowest. The inherent force of attraction which pervades all matter, organic and inorganic, and constitutes *love*, has with you proceeded to the advanced stage, at which love means sympathy and self-devotion. She to whom you are wedded is still in that primitive stage in which attraction is mechanical rather than moral, is of body rather than of soul—the blind attraction of otherwise inert masses, like the orbs of heaven and the constituents of the earth—and is but the basis of love, rather than the love which later comes. Only continue to have patience, and your influence will yet permeate the system which has hitherto rejected it. The love that is not self-love ultimately conquers all things. It is the sole universal solvent. It may be in time, or it may be in eternity."

"The hope may enable me to endure to the end," replied Criss; "but it has no potency to charm her whom I love and would save. Can ye not give me aught that I may bear back to her? Sweet face! loving heart!" he exclaimed, addressing himself to the bride-angel, who, he now observed, carried in her arms that which showed him that she too had become a mother, even a mother of angels; "hast thou no wonder-working word of admonition which I may carry back with me?"

The young matron-angel kissed her child, and then bent her head over against that of her spouse, and after a brief conference with him, said,—

"It is permitted me to impart to thee the secret of all happiness, whether in heaven or elsewhere: the secret that would convert even the dread regions of the lost to a scene of bliss, had those regions not long ago been for ever utterly abolished.

Know, then, that the resolve, persistently maintained, to make the best of that which we have and are, would make of hell itself a heaven; and how much more of earth! While, ever to make the worst of things would turn heaven itself into a hell. The mind is its own bliss or woe."

"You mean that I have failed to make the best of her?"

"Nay," responded the other. "The application was meant for her, not for thee."

Criss shook his head as he thought of the uselessness of presenting such a rule to Nannie. In answer to his look appealing for yet further guidance, the tall Angel took him aside, and said,—

"This for thine own ear, for few are equal to the knowledge. Mankind and ourselves are identical in essence. It is the stage and conditions which differ. We have no superincumbent mass of plasm through which to struggle to our soul's development; and to us virtue brings but little reward, its practice being so easy. With men it is not so. There are some in whom the divine spark is so dim and chill, that their smallest deed or thought of goodness weighs for much in the everlasting balance. For these things go by proportion. It is not to lack or to badness of heart that the conduct is due through which you suffer, but to narrowness of vision,—a narrowness necessarily inherent in the sex whose special function is maternity. If her mind be too tightly girt with the affections which centre in self and in offspring, to be capable of enlargement in the present, remember that Nature has need of such characteristics to ensure continuance, and that hereafter it may not be so. Yet one word more. With us, like weds only with like, and constituted as we are, we cannot be mistaken in our mutual estimates, any more than the magnet and the steel. In your world it is different. There the envelope is ofttimes too dense, and the character too tardy of development, for the effect of love upon the disposition to be foreseen. In such case, to court the irrevocable in marriage is to rush presumptuously upon fate. But, as I have already said, the defect with her to whom you have bound yourself is intellectual, not moral. Let this, and the

certainty that you are loved utterly, with such love as she is capable of, comfort and sustain you. Farewell."

On his return from this flight, Criss's countenance shewed unwonted serenity, and he said something about the calm airs aloft, and the force of old associations. Nannie's suspiciousness at once took fire, for she had not failed to observe his altered look. Remembering his old habit of going up in search of spiritual intercourse, she exclaimed,—

"You have been among those angels again? Have you? I will know! I won't have you leaving me for creatures who will make you think me ugly and bad by comparison."

"Why, Nannie, even if I have been among angels up there, surely you don't want to make me feel that I am not with an angel when down here? You can be one when you like. You can't help having the look of one. Why not act like one, also?"

"Time enough when I get up there, and have only angels to deal with. I treat people as I find them."

"I am rejoiced to find you contemplating such amendment."

"As what?"

"As will suffer your admission to a region where jealousy and altercation are unknown."

"Then it must be a very stupid place, and I don't want to go to it. And I say again, that if you will persist in cultivating what you call your ideal, you can't expect ever to be satisfied with your real, which is me."

Thus, the birth of their second child was heralded by a renewal of the old wretched scenes, and it required all the native strength and hopefulness of Criss's character to keep him from subsiding into a condition of settled despondency.

"Here is a surprise, Nannie," he said to her one morning after opening a large letter bearing the official seal of the First Minister. "You won't object to being called 'My Lady' in future?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"It is through no seeking of mine, you may be sure," he

answered. "The Government has appointed me to a seat in the Upper House, accompanying the notice with the most flattering letter." And he handed it to her to read for herself.

It contained a brief but warm encomium on his character and life, public and private, and an expression of hope that he would, by accepting the proffered dignity, let his own country have a yet larger share of the wide enthusiasm for humanity which had inspired his magnificent endeavors for the regeneration of the continent of Africa.

The same post had brought also a letter from Avenil, congratulating Criss on the event to which he, Avenil, had been privy, and saying that although most of the functions of governing were now-a-days practically vested in *Bureaux*, yet these wanted careful supervision, and that the very consciousness on the part of officials that intelligent zeal was appreciated by the Legislative Chambers, served to secure to the country the benefits of good administration. Besides, the progress of civilization, so far from abolishing the necessity for government, as had once been supposed would be the case, was ever producing new complications and needs.

"Are there women in it?" was Nannie's first query.

"It is a House of Lords, not of Lords and Ladies, I assure you," returned Criss.

"Well, I don't care, it is all a plot against me, to take you away." And she lashed herself into a fury.

Criss thought he would try a new tack.

"Well, Nannie, I won't say positively that it is not so. It is very likely that the First Minister has heard of me as a poor fellow trying hard to do his duty in the world, but so plagued by the childish fancies of a foolish jealous little wife, as to be utterly miserable and worn out; and that it has occurred to him that he may be giving me some relief by taking me a little from home, to breathe the serene air of the Legislature. He is a very good-natured man, this First Minister of ours, I assure you. I really should not be surprised if that was the explanation of it, for you know that the letter is mere flattery,

and that I have never justified such language by trying to be a bit of use in the world."

"I hate all talk about use, and duty, and such stuff. A man who has a wife, has no business to think of duty elsewhere. What's duty to love!"

"Well, Nannie, I am truly sorry that you should be so disappointed in your husband. It is a great pity we did not clearly understand at first what your requirements would be."

"You will say next that you are disappointed in your wife, I suppose."

"I should say but the truth. I should have liked a wife who, on finding her husband so appreciated as to be invested with the highest honors his country has to bestow, would be happy with all the joy of which her loving heart was capable, and by the sweetness of her congratulations, stimulate him to yet greater endeavors to adorn his life, and hers, with beautiful deeds."

"Oh yes, you are always hinting that you wish you had married some other woman. But you have married me, and I am not one of that sort."

"I was referring to no woman in particular, but only to what any woman would do who had the slightest particle of a heart, and knew what love meant."

"You used to think me perfect."

"So I do still, as regards the physical and outward part of your nature."

"Well, isn't that enough?"

"On the contrary, it only makes your deficiency in all other respects the more palpable and hard to bear, just as the sight of a lovely fiend or maniac would be more distressing than that of one whose outward appearance corresponds with its mental condition. Oh, Nannie! Nannie!" he cried, with a burst of uncontrolled anguish, such as he had never before permitted himself to indulge, "Angel still in form, however fallen in spirit, is it indeed beyond the power of love, human or divine, to redeem you from the curse that enthrals you?"

"Fallen!" she exclaimed, "I was never any better than I am."

"True," he replied; "I fashioned my speech too much according to the ancient traditions. I ought to have said, 'Nannie, with a capacity for being the angel you look, will no treatment develop the latent soul within you?' Yet in one sense my first phrase was right. You have fallen from the high pedestal of the ideal on which my imagination once placed you."

"Ah, but that was your mistake, for placing me there."

"It was indeed, and bitterly am I punished for that one error of judgment."

"What answer are you going to return about that appointment?"

"Are you desirous of advising me?" he asked.

"I will be good," she answered, "if you will do one thing to please me. Decline the Minister's offer."

Criss went into his study, and presently returned holding out a paper to her.

"I propose to send something of this kind," he said. "What do you think of it? Isn't that a very good pet name for you in future?"

She read the rough draft, and said,—

"So I am the 'Domestic Affliction,' and you accept the office with the intention of fulfilling its duties so far as your 'Domestic Affliction' will permit?"

"Yes, dear—I mean, Domestic Affliction, such is my design."

"I won't be laughed at. I never could bear being laughed at."

"I have tried crying over you, in vain. I must laugh now for a change. It is a change I sorely need, heaven knows;" and he sighed heavily. "Nannie," he said suddenly, as a new thought struck him, "for the future I waste no more words of reproof or remonstrance upon you. Whenever you indulge in one of the tempers with which you love so to distress me, I shall not utter a word, but only laugh, until you come out of your evil humor."

He had some time since made it a rule never to make men-

tion to her of any person or object of any kind beside herself. So habitual had it become with her to vent ill-natured remarks concerning them, whether he himself showed interest in them or not. "Why do you talk to me about them. I don't care to hear about other folks. You seem to care about everybody and everything more than about me." The moment, however, that she observed his reticence, she charged him with being deceitful, and having concealments from her. To this his reply had been,—

"Nannie, it ought to be enough for you to abuse me. My friends at least should be sacred; and I shall do what I can to keep them so, by never referring to one of them in your presence. You have already by your virulence cut off almost every possible topic of conversation between us. So that silence is really becoming my sole resource."

This time she looked at him half-incredulous and half-frightened, and said,—

"It doesn't distress you more than it does myself."

"Prove it by your conduct to be so, then," he replied, "or I shall think that you take a pleasure in distressing yourself, as much as in distressing me."

There was a somewhat longer interval than usual before she again broke out. Criss ascribed this, partly to the perplexity induced by the novel treatment with which he had threatened her, and partly to the alarm she could not conceal, at his frequent absences from home on the plea of attending the sittings in the House of Lords. Nannie had taken fright lest he should thereby become in a measure weaned from her. What would all her explosions effect when met by the triple shield of absence, silence, and laughter?

One day, to his intense surprise, he came upon her kneeling beside her bed. No one could pray for aught that was evil. To wish for a thing that was good, sufficiently to pray for it, was, provided it was a thing coming within range of the spiritual laws, surely to be far on the way towards its achievement. The soul must at length be budding!

Filled with joy and hope, Criss endeavored to retreat without

hearing her words, for she was praying aloud. But she uttered her petition with too much vehemence for him to accomplish this purpose. It was a petition that he and their child, or children, might die before her.

Horror-struck, he rushed towards her, exclaiming,—

"Nannie, Nannie, what is the meaning of such a prayer?"

She hesitated and looked confused; but at length confessed that she had prayed thus through jealousy lest any other woman should have to do with them in the event of their outliving herself.

CHAPTER XII.

UNABLE to make any way by means of angry reproaches, owing to Criss's persistence in a policy of silence, the unhappy Nannie at length conceived the idea of exhibiting her master passion in deeds. Criss came home one day to find her alone in the house with her child. After a scene in which she had completely lost herself, she had dismissed the entire household at a moment's notice, on the plea that they were in league with their master against her. Her equanimity restored by the performance of this feat, she went to the garden entrance, and quietly awaited Criss's return. In due time he arrived, doubtful of the humor in which he might find her, and was overjoyed at the unwonted sweetness and meekness of her demeanor. Little Zöe was with her, and together they repaired to the house. Criss was surprised at not seeing any servant in waiting, and was about to ring for one, but Nannie stopped him, by saying,—

"Is there anything you want, Criss dear? I will get it for you."

"I only wanted a servant."

"Yes, dear, it is no use your ringing. There is no one there."

"How, no one there?"

"They provoked me, and I sent them away."

"What, all of them?"

"Yes, every one. There is not a soul in the house besides ourselves."

"You have sent all my servants away! And for what reason?"

"They were my servants, too; and I am mistress here!"

"Let me hear the cause. I must know how far you were justified."

"Justified! I hope I may dismiss my servants when I choose, without being 'justified.'"

"No; no one is superior to justice. I must know all the particulars."

"And if I won't give them?"

"I shall know that you are in the wrong, and send for them back again."

"You will outrage your wife by doing that?"

"Pardon me; I shall be repairing an outrage done by my wife upon justice."

"The idea of putting justice in the scale against your wife! You make me jealous of Justice. You make me hate it and all the other stupid virtues. I shall be jealous of the servants, too, if you take their part against me. Justice, indeed! No, no. Love, that *is* love, is not for abstractions; it is only for a person, and does not think of goodness, or anything but that person."

Criss was firm; and finding that Nannie's conduct had been absolutely causeless, reinstated the whole of his household, apologizing to them for the act of his wife. The affection and gratitude they exhibited towards him did not by any means serve to appease her; but she feared to repeat the act, for Criss declared that he would take her to live at the Triangle, where the servants were beyond the control of individual caprice; and she hated the Triangle because he had so many friends in it.

"Nannie," he said to her one day, when this storm had passed away, "I want you to specify to me the causes of your discontent, in order that we may both comprehend clearly what it is that makes us so miserable. Of course, being but mortals, we cannot govern all things; and you are not so unreasonable as to visit upon me that which is inevitable, and beyond man's power to prevent. Now, I beg you will think over and enumerate to me the various items, great and small, in respect of which you deem your lot inferior to that of the most fortunate women you have known. If you don't like to speak them, write them, and I will see what I can do to amend them. Here's a sheet of paper. Is it big enough to contain the list? I will number the items," and he numbered the lines with a big **1, 2. 3.**

She stopped him when he had got thus far.

"You write it," she said.

"Well, now for number **1**?"

"My husband makes me jealous."

"Very good; that is down. Now for number **2**?"

"You don't deny it."

"That part comes afterwards. What am I to write against number **2**?"

"The same. 'My husband makes me jealous.' And number **3** also. There, now you know all."

"Not quite. We have now got to fill up the explanatory clauses. How does he make you jealous?"

"Oh, if you don't know by this time, I am not going to take the trouble to repeat it."

"Nannie, I must have some very serious talk with you, to which I insist upon your listening. It is the way of all rational beings to form a certain plan or ideal of the life they wish to follow, and to construct such ideal according to their own constitution of mind and body, and the circumstances by which they are surrounded. Having constructed such ideal, and entered upon the practice of it, they follow it out to the best of their ability, amending or rejecting, as experience may dictate, whatever interferes with or jars upon it. Now, tell me, have you

formed any ideal of life, in the pursuit of which your happiness consists, and from which you endeavor to exclude all foreign and intrusive elements. If you have, I should be most grateful to you for communicating it to me. Nothing would give me greater delight than to help you to maintain the ideal on which your happiness depends, and, if necessary, help you to revise it. Tell me your scheme, and then, if you please, I will tell you mine."

Nannie said that she knew nothing whatever about ideals, and had no scheme, but acted only from impulse.

"I act from impulse, too," replied Criss, "but my impulse prompts me to form and act up to a certain ideal. Having constructed it according to the very best I can imagine, by aid of all the lights I can obtain, that ideal becomes to me as God. This God, I once fondly hoped faithfully to follow throughout the whole of my life, my path at the same time being gladdened by the tender love I should receive from, and bestow on the sweet partner of my home. This God I am resolved to follow to the end, whether I be blest with such joy or not. Should my expected joy be turned into misery, my rose become all thorn, the only question would be, not should I abandon my ideal, but should I give up that which causes my misery? Nannie, in obstructing my ideal of life, you are seeking to withdraw me from God. If I have to give up either, you know me too well to doubt which it will be. Even if I can stand the constant wear and tear of heart, brain, and spirit, which your conduct causes me, my desire for your welfare would compel me to separate you altogether from one in whose love you cannot be happy."

"You would give me up! Then I know there is some other woman——"

Utterly sick at heart, he turned away to leave the room, exclaiming,—

"Better had it been for you, cursed with such a nature, had I left you to take the fatal leap from the burning wreck on which I found you. Nay, better even to have left you to be outraged to death by the ruffians on Atlantika, while yet young

and innocent, than preserve you to develop into that which you have become. Never more let man save the life of another, unless he is sure that he is not saving it for a worse fate! I—I have saved a serpent to poison my own life!"

"Criss! Criss, dear!" called Nannie after him; "don't go, I want to speak to you."

He returned, looking haggard and ill.

"Be brief and careful," he said; "my patience is nearly exhausted."

"I only wanted to tell you that you go the wrong way to work with me. You don't understand women—no men do—or you wouldn't make such a fuss about us, or let us put you out so. Because you mean things when you say them, you think we do so too. Never was a greater mistake. If you were to take no notice of my—my—naughtiness, I shouldn't care to be naughty. But it attracts your attention to me, and—I like to attract your attention."

He looked somewhat sternly at her, and then said,—

"Nannie, I shall take you at your word. Only, mind this,—if the prescription fails, I try another."

At the next outbreak, Nannie, who had forgotten the new condition, was astounded to find Criss, instead of lamenting and remonstrating with her, taking it quite coolly, and saying,—

"All right, Nannie darling; fire away; I won't mind. I dare say the attack will soon pass off if you give it free vent. But please just stop a moment, and compose those nice lips of yours into one of your charming pouts, while I kiss them. It will be a new sensation to kiss a lovely termagant in the very midst of her fury. No? Well, if I musn't reward you with a kiss for the capital receipt you have given me, I will just go out for a bit, and come back when I think the storm is quite over." And he turned to quit the room.

To be taken at her word was the last thing Nannie intended. She was furious at the indifference he had, in obedience to her, so well assumed. Snatching up something heavy that lay at

hand—neither she nor Criss ever knew exactly what it was—she rushed towards the door as he was going, and while his back was turned, struck him with all her might on the head, exclaiming,—

"There! that will teach you to outrage a woman's feelings."

So heavy was the blow that Criss was for some moments stunned. Staggering against the wall, he managed to support himself there until power and consciousness returned. She meanwhile, stood watching him, apparently without having made up her mind as to the next step, for the situation was a new one, and she had no experience to guide her.

On recovering from the first shock, Criss took his wife by the wrist, and led her to a sofa. He did this gently, but firmly, and she made no resistance. Seating himself there beside her, he said,—

"Nannie, a prudent doctor always informs his patient of the effect likely to be produced by any new medicine, so that the patient may not be taken unawares. You omitted to tell me what would be the effect of my following your prescription of indifference to your bad conduct, and thus have, as it were, laid a trap for me. But now that I know so much, I shall be able to take the necessary precautions. There is one point in which I shall imitate the doctor. A long standing complaint is not to be cured by a single dose. I shall continue the treatment you have prescribed, in spite of its having seemingly aggravated the symptoms. So, if you like to let me have the kiss now, which you refused before, please adjust those charming lips ——"

But Nannie was obdurate. So Criss added,—

"Pray don't keep me waiting for it, for my head sadly needs doctoring, and your skill in surgery does not include the reparative as well as the destructive branches of the art."

"Nonsense! call yourself a man, and care about a little tap like that! I didn't think you were a coward before."

"Ah, Nannie, even we men have our weak points. Now that you have found mine out, I hope that you will be considerate of it. But you wouldn't like to have such a deformity as a

two-headed husband, and I certainly shall look as if I had two heads if something is not done soon to allay the swelling. Just feel it." And he guided her hand, unresisting, to the wound.

Nannie had always had a morbid horror of blood. When she withdrew her hand, it was crimson with the blood with which his hair was saturated.

Uttering a scream, she turned away and buried her face in a cushion, and sobbed bitterly.

"I suppose the prescription applies to all outbreaks, whether of reproaches or tears," said Criss, rising; so while you are indulging yourself, I will go and have my head mended. I should like to have had that kiss first, though."

"You will find me dead when you come back," she sobbed, scarce lifting her face from its hiding place.

"Blissful hope!" cried Criss, gaily. "Don't disappoint it. Au revoir!"

"Poor child," he said to himself after leaving her, "if this does not cure her, the case must be hopeless. And what is to be the end of it!"

"Doctor!" he said suddenly, while the wound was being examined in the doctor's surgery, for on second thoughts he had gone thither instead of sending for the doctor to come to him,—"Doctor, what is to be the end of it?"

"Brain fever and death."

"No, no, I mean for my wife, if she refuses to abandon her wild fancies."

"I was speaking of her. There is no fear for your brain. There is fear, however, of serious inflammation of the injured tissues; and as you must have absolute quietness, I intend to keep you in close custody here, and let my wife nurse you."

Criss looked wistfully at the doctor, as if suspecting he meant more than he said.

"I see you divine my motive," said the doctor. "It is a twofold one. A good fright, and enforced separation from you, through her own act, will be the best possible thing for your wife. If that lesson fails, you may give her up with a good

conscience. Happily the law of the land permits separation without making sin an indispensable formality. And all moral laws combine to dictate such a course to a man in defence of his life, his character, and his proper career in the world. Your usefulness is being sacrificed."

"By the way, doctor, I did not tell you how my head came to be injured."

"And therefore I knew it was by your wife. You would not otherwise have concealed it."

Criss reluctantly consented to go up stairs and lie down, at least for a while; the doctor promising to have Nannie watched, and let Criss know if his presence was called for.

Surprised at his failure to return, Nannie sent a servant to enquire if the doctor knew where he was.

An answer to the effect that he was there very ill, and must on no account be disturbed, caused Nannie to follow with all speed.

She was ushered into a room, and kept waiting for some time before anyone came.

At length Doctress Markwell entered, and enquired what she pleased to want.

"Want! I hear my husband is here, ill, and I have come to attend on him."

"You are very good, but he is being perfectly cared for, by the doctor and myself."

"But I am his wife, and insist on——"

"Insist on completing your work, and killing him outright?"

"Out of my way, woman! I shall go to my husband." And she rushed towards the stairs.

"That is quite out of the question. He is far away in a place secure from intrusion, and even from noise. You can neither reach him, nor make yourself heard by him. He has friends who love and respect him, to care for him now, thank God."

"And do you think I do not love him?"

"It may be with such love as exists among wild beasts, but not with what human beings call love."

Nannie raved awhile, but finding she made no progress, at length went home, somewhat calmed by the suggestion that it would please him best to find that she was attending to her child.

Daily the same scene was renewed, the doctor remaining firm, in the hope of conquering Nannie's wilfulness, and only telling Criss that his wife came daily to enquire if she might come and nurse him. He spoke with no sanguine anticipation of a favorable issue for her. "A woman who avows herself indifferent to consequences," he said, "and at all hazards persists in indulging her wildest impulses, is beyond the reach of skill. It is a growth that is needed, not an alterative. Judging by this characteristic, and what you tell me of her parentage, I should say that she has *Calvinism in the blood.* No man acts fairly by his own life and happiness, unless he takes into account the character of the stock with which he allies himself, as well as the early training of the individual."

The event proved the correctness of the doctor's prognostications. Nannie soon forgot the lesson she had received, and showed herself inaccessible to a sense even of the most serious consequences. Her motto might have been that of the ancient divinity, "I am, and what I am I shall be," for she recognized no law but that of her own unreasoning will; and self-consciousness, and effort at amendment were altogether beyond her. But the end, for that came at last, differed somewhat from that which had been foreshadowed. In the meantime Criss threw all prescriptions and endeavors to improve her, to the winds, and was kind, tender, and loving, as if she had been the best of wives, treating her as a victim of disease, and not of mere wilfulness.

Intensely as Criss felt Nannie's behavior for himself, it was for her that his feelings were most deeply exercised. Why could she not be as perfect in all respects as she was in respect of the functions specially belonging to her sex? Surely the old Oriental notion that man only is endowed with soul, had no foundation in fact. Yet here was one who was a woman of women, and yet to all appearance utterly incapable of moral

development. With her, love was all, and of that she could not have enough. So completely was her whole nature devoted to it, that she needed no distractions to enable her to rest and return to its exercise with fresh appetite. It seemed as if sex had so early attained its maturity in her as to arrest and take the place of all other development,—a phenomenon due, perchance, thought Criss, to the tropical climate in which she had been reared.

Pondering thus, long and anxiously, and seeking as was his wont, to find a place for her in his generalizations of the world, he became impressed with the idea that hers might be one of those natures into which, only through the ministration of pain, could an avenue be opened for the entry of the lacking soul. "Pain, Sorrow, Repentance, these constitute, at least for some, the triune creator of the human soul. The Fall was indeed a rise, inasmuch as, through the sorrow that followed, man found, not lost, his soul. He was made perfect through suffering. Nannie! Nannie! Am I to be the period to your initial stage of moral unconsciousness, and become to you as a schoolmaster to develop the inner life within you? The gospel of grace failing, must I fall back on the law?"

It was not Criss alone who indulged in the process of ratiocination. Nannie thought, too, sometimes, or at least carried on a process analogous to thinking, in whatever it was that constituted the corresponding part of her system. Criss's musings, just recorded, were interrupted by her with the remark,—

"I wish, Criss dear, you would change our doctor, for one that has not got a doctress for a wife."

"I am quite in the dark," he said. "Tell me all you are thinking, Nannie."

"I know," she continued, "that you have known him all your life, and look upon him as a great friend, and all that. But now that you are married, things are different. You fancy, I dare say, that a woman doctor is best for a woman, as knowing most about her nature and ways?"

"Certainly. Do you think it is not so?"

"Oh, of course it is so, and that is my objection to them. They know too much, and are apt to be hard upon us in consequence. Every woman is cruel to other women, for women all look upon each other as rivals, and they hurt each other on purpose. I should do just the same if I were a doctress."

"But, without quite agreeing with what you say of your sex," returned Criss, amused in spite of himself at his wife's ascription of her own irrational jealousy to the whole of her sex, "I think an arrangement can be made to suit all parties without my acting so unfriendly and rude a part by a life-long friend. Suppose that for the future Dr. Markwell attends you, and Doctress Markwell attends me?"

"Criss! you wouldn't, you daren't, have a woman to attend you!" almost shrieked Nannie. "I should kill her, I know I should, and I should be quite justified in it. Besides, that wouldn't answer the purpose at all. For even if she did not see me, he would still be able to consult her about me, and she would be sure to advise what she knew would hurt me. Oh, you don't know what cats we women are!"

"Well, Nannie, you seem determined that I shall not remain in ignorance. Perhaps, after all, the best way will be for us to keep well so that neither of us require a doctor. I promise you that I will do all I can on my part to avoid calling in Mrs. Markwell."

"You never do what I wish, but always object and argue and make conditions, just as if I was not your wife, and had no right to have my feelings considered. I am sure it is a small enough thing that I want—this time."

"A small thing! that I should show gross rudeness and ingratitude to people to whom I owe so much——"

"Owe! why you have paid them well——"

Here Nannie paused, for she saw upon her husband's face an expression of intense disgust at this utterance. For his anger she cared little,—that was not incompatible with love. But she did not want to incur his contempt. His reply convinced her that she had gone too far.

"I will see what I can do to meet your wishes," he said

coldly, and rising to leave the room. "Perchance it may be better for you to be placed in a position wherein you will be free to choose your own line of action in all things, without reference to me. For it is clear that we cannot agree upon a common point of view."

If Criss seriously contemplated a separation from his wife, it was not for his own sake. The very feminity of her nature bound him to her so completely, that he would endure anything that was painful to himself merely. But he could not imagine her as equally wrapped up in him while she persistently abstained from making the slightest effort to mould herself to his wishes. He began to think that she would be both happier and better without him, perhaps in some other and more congenial association. The thought was agony to him. But for her good he would dare anything.

A conversation which took place that same evening at Bertie's served to mature his thoughts on the subject. Avenil and Dr. Markwell were there together with Bertie and Criss. As all were old and attached friends, all rejoiced in the news which Avenil had brought from town. It was to the effect that his youngest sister, Bessie, had, after little more than a year of separation from her husband, begged to rejoin him, and her prayer had been accepted.

It had come about in this way. For the first month of her self-imposed widowhood, Bessie had seemed to rejoice in her freedom. She owned herself, however, surprised at the lack of warmth with which she was received in society. She could not understand why she should be looked on coldly when she had only exercised an undoubted right. Being strong and brave of spirit she determined to treat this as a matter of little moment. At the same time she could not help admitting to herself that she was more lonely than she had expected to be; and she was very glad when, at the expiration of the first six months, her child came to spend the second half of the year with its mother. It was a little girl, and Bessie took to it with an

ardor that astonished herself. Her period flew as time had never before flown with Bessie. She was in despair when the time came for the child to return to its father. Seeing her tears and agitation, the child remarked,—

"Papa cried too when I came away from him."

This put an idea into Bessie's head, but before acting on it, she determined to see first how she was affected by the renewed separation from her child. A short time was sufficient to show her both that she herself could not be happy without it, and that she had inflicted on her husband, who evidently loved the child as much as she did, a far greater degree of pain than she had been aware of. Her motives for desiring a separation in the first instance now appeared to her to be of the most trivial and selfish character; so much so, indeed, that she doubted if ever she could be forgiven and received back.

Forgiven and received back! Should she stoop to this, and put it in the power of people to say that she repented only because she had failed to get another husband?

The struggle was bitter, but it was brief. She was an Avenil, and therefore had a strong heart as well as a strong head. "What is it to me what people say, if I think it right, and choose to do it?"

In this mood she wrote to her husband:—

"I have been selfish, but I knew not how selfish until now. Am I beyond your fogiveness?"

His reply found her nearly distracted by the suspense. When she read it, all was joy. It ran thus:—

"I love you still as ever. If you can be content with such love as mine, come."

To this the little one added, in her large childish hand, "Come, dear mamma," with a rude circle drawn beneath, in which was written the words *Two Kisses*, to signify that she and her father had each imprinted a kiss on that spot.

"There is no doubt what would have been the result under the ancient law," remarked the doctor, when Avenil had finished his narrative. "The unhappy couple, unable to separate legally, would have dwelt together in discontent and misery until death did them part, or degradation worse than death."

"The child was the real reconciler," observed Bertie.

"And a very proper function too, for a child," said the doctor, "and one fully recognized by the law when it left Nature free to operate unembarrassed by artificial enactments."

"Would it not have done as well," suggested Criss, "for them to have tried a temporary separation before completely dissolving their union?"

"Most assuredly not," said Avenil. "It is true that but for the child, either or both would probably have contracted a fresh marriage within a year. But only the conviction of the reality of the separation would have worked such a change in the mother. She had long thought that all was over. Her very despair served to redeem her. A separation which she could regard as terminable at any time would have produced no such salutary effect."

"Redeemed by despair," repeated Criss to himself, as he walked, pondering, homewards. "And I had been thinking of sorrow and suffering, but without the other dread element, as a means of saving my own poor child, and evoking an inner life. Would a like regime answer with her? Certainly not, unless she voluntarily undertook it herself. And this she has no motive or desire to do. For she is not really discontented. Her idea of love is that of a rapid alternation of conflicts and reconciliations. It includes a spice of hate as an essential ingredient. The Avenils have heads as well as hearts. They can commit mistakes and repent, and be better for them. My poor Nannie has no head to go wrong with, therefore none to repent and amend with. Were she to find herself separated from me for any fault of hers, so far from seeing and owning her fault and improving, she would, like a wild animal, tear herself in pieces with rage. Strange arrest of development! in all that relates to the fundamental fact of her being, she is, and knows

herself to be, perfect. But of any superstructure that ought to be raised on that foundation, she comprehends and tolerates nothing. What a power she would have been in an Eastern Hareem! How perverse the fate that made her mistress of an English monogamist's home! And yet—and yet—I doubt whether she is unhappy. Well, if it be so, and the suffering is all mine, let it be so. I can endure. And I shall endure it the better if I believe that she does not suffer likewise."

So Criss reasoned himself out of the idea which had suggested itself to him, the idea of separating from Nannie. He did not know that after his departure from the cottage, his friends discussed his case, and came to a not very different conclusion. Avenil had asked the doctor whether he thought Bessie's history would suggest to Criss a practical remedy for his troubles. The answer was,—

"He will think of it, and reject it as not suited to the patient's constitution."

"I meant for his own comfort," added Avenil.

"He will consider nothing but her good. His Christianity consists in being faithful to his convictions even up to crucifying-point. He knows that such a measure as a separation would induce in her acute cerebral inflammation, to which madness would probably supervene. No, what she requires is a religion. I doubt whether anything else will reach her complaint."

"Well, doctor," said Avenil, "if you have in your pharmacopœia a religion capable of curing a woman of jealousy, the sooner you prescribe it the better. But I confess that I never heard of one."

"I can guess," remarked Bertie, "what our dear boy himself would say on that point. He would say, 'If love fails, can religion succeed?'"

Relief came in a way unanticipated and undesired. It was the time of midwinter. Their second child was a few months old. Nannie had retired to rest alone, for Criss had gone to see

Bertie, who was again attacked with sudden and severe illness. Despite her promise to go to bed as usual, she had sat up till past midnight waiting for Criss's return, as he had promised not to delay after the dangerous symptoms had abated. At length she yielded to the entreaties of the nurse, and went to bed.

Criss remained with Bertie until the remedies had worked the desired change. It wanted yet several hours of daylight when the doctor pronounced the danger over for the present. Criss then started off in a bitter storm of wind and sleet to walk home.

He had not gone far when he thought he heard a faint cry, as if calling some one. Seeing nothing, he continued his course, but at a slackened pace. Presently there was a sound of steps, accompanied by a cry of agonized despair. This brought him to a stand, and while standing something rushed upon him, carrying a burden, and just as it reached him, fell to the ground, uttering a name which he did not catch.

"My poor creature, who and what is it wandering at such a time and in such weather?" he exclaimed, in a pitying tone, and stooping to raise the prostrate figure. "A woman! half clad! and a child too! Come, let me raise you up, and put this warm cloak round you, and if you have no other and nearer refuge, let me support you to my house, where you shall be cared for. It is enough to kill the little one, to say nothing of its mother, as I suppose you to be."

"I was forced to bring the child, or it would have cried and awakened the nurse; and they would have prevented me from coming——"

"What, Nannie," cried Criss, thunderstruck on recognizing his own wife and little son.

"Yes," she continued, "it is Nannie. I was so wretched and miserable without you, and so frightened to think that—that—but see! see! the child is warm, oh, so nice and warm. I kept him so closely wrapped up in my shawl. He is quite warm, though I have been waiting for you to come so long, so long. I thought my feet would have been frozen. Yes, take and carry

him for me. Now I have found you I can forgive you all—all. And let me hold your arm and we will soon be home. Oh, not so fast, I cannot keep up."

Whatever Criss might feel, it was no time to expend words either in anger or pity. With much difficulty he got them home, and having directed the nurse, whom he found just awakened and half distraught with fright on discovering their absence, to put both mother and child instantly into a warm bath, he went to his study to summon Dr. Markwell.

A long time of sadness followed. First, the little one went; and then Nannie's fever from cold and—I was about to say—remorse, but to this, indomitable to the last, she would never own. The fever from cold and excitement settled on her lungs, and brought on a consumption which defied all skill.

During its progress, Nannie acknowledged to Criss that in her heart she had always, even while behaving her worst, believed firmly in the depth and genuineness of his affection. Yet, so ingrained in her nature was the sentiment of jealousy which had led to such lamentable results, that even to the last she busied herself in contriving for Criss plans of dissuasion from a second marriage. In this view she said to him one day,—

"Criss, dear, I will tell you a reason why you ought never to marry again. Your love is of the kind that would drive any woman mad. By-the-by, doctor," she said suddenly to him, "am I mad? Must I not have been mad to have had such impressions as I had, if they were not true?"

"No, my dear lady. Everyone is liable to impressions, fancies, or ideas; for such things constitute an element of thought. Madness consists in acting upon mere impressions, especially when they are devoid of probability, and incapable of verification."

"Tell me," she said to Criss another time, "what was your feeling when I was behaving so ill,—when I struck you, for instance? Weren't you in a great rage, and longing to knock me down? I know I wished you had,—sometimes. I wanted to feel that I had good cause to be naughty."

"My first feeling was for you, my poor darling. I thought of the agony of unhappiness you were laying up for yourself."

"Yes, yes; that's quite true. It was so; only I was too proud to let you know it. But what was the second?"

"The second was a reflection which gave me vast comfort. I felt that your confidence in my love must indeed be unbounded, when you could subject it to such severe tests."

"I should like to live, Criss. But no; it is better I should die. You will always love me if I go now. If I were to live, I should do something much worse than I have done yet,—something that would make you hate me. Oh, I know I should! The demon is too strong in me for me ever to be good. Unless —unless—I could remain always as I am now. Do ask the doctor, Criss, if he can keep me alive just as I am, without getting any better or any worse. I think the consumption agrees with me. I am sure I feel better and happier, and more goodlike than I ever did before I had it. I wonder if I could behave worse were I to get well. I hope, Criss, it was not I that caused our little boy's death. Oh, if I did that, I am a murderess already!"

"My dearest Nannie, put such wild and dreadful fancies out of your head," he exclaimed; for he was resolved to keep from her the agonizing truth that the child had indeed been killed by the exposure of that terrible night. Had her own life not been threatened, such knowledge might have been necessary as a lesson against yielding to her uncontrolled impulses.

Avenil rejoiced in Criss's bereavement almost as much as he had rejoiced in his marriage. It is true, he regarded Nannie as the most perfect specimen of simple womanhood he had known, for the potency in her of the instinct of monopoly, and the absolute concentration of all the faculties of her being upon the main function of her sex. It was by this light that he was wont to interpret the ancient legend of Eve, which represents the woman as taking the initiative. In Avenil's view, derived from a profound study of natural history, Nannie would have been less perfect as a woman had she possessed a greater width of intellectual comprehension.

He thought, moreover, that he discerned a certain affinity of character between the husband and wife, in that each possessed a highly emotional temperament. Criss's religiousness, he held, would have endangered his sanity, had it not been counteracted by a sound education and training. It was through the lack of such discipline, that Nannie's emotions had driven her to the borderland of madness. Now that men have ceased to coerce their wives by superior physical force, or to allow priests to do it for them by means of spiritual terror, or society by might of conventional law, the only safeguard that women have against the tyranny of their own emotions is to be found in the training of their imitative faculties, or whatever it is in them that corresponds to the intellect in men. That the entire female population of the globe had escaped coming to utter grief, he held to be due to the strong hands of the male part. The necessity of being cruel only to be kind, thus, to Avenil, accounted fully and satisfactorily for the ancient regime of "injustice to women." Avenil, it should be mentioned, is not a married man. He has never, he says, found time.

Finding Criss continuing too long inconsolable, his faithful friend, the doctor, ventured one day to remark, by way of remonstrance,—

"You are thinking of her as living in all her surpassing loveliness and irresistible vivacity, and without the drawback of the excitability which marred her perfections. Endeavor rather to think of the fate that awaited her and you, if she had lived. You, perhaps, murdered; she, certainly in a mad-house. If ever foolish woman was bent upon driving herself mad, she was. If no other, let the reflection that you are both spared this, be your consolation."

Nannie's last words had been,—

"You wanted Nature, and you got it—pure, genuine, unadulterated Nature. Did you not, Criss dear? Own you did, and say that you liked it so,—better than if it had been civilized and tame. I know how it is, Criss. You thought you were wedding sunshine, and you wedded a volcano. Never mind,

Criss; it will soon be an extinct one. Perhaps it will some day come to be, for you, like that one we could see from our place in Soudan, its rugged sides covered and hidden with beautiful plants and flowers. I hope, Criss, you will let your ugly memories of me be covered up by fair ones. I can't bear there should be anything ugly about me, even when I am dead. Don't cry for me too long; I should never have been any better were I to live a thousand years. I am worse than the volcano. I am more like the lightning, that can only blast and destroy, and never produce anything good or beautiful; though you did tell me once that the lightning and volcano have the same origin as the sunshine. Perhaps they have; I don't understand anything. I only know one thing, and that is,—I should never have been any better, never,—unless you beat me. Oh, Criss, Criss! why wouldn't you beat me?"

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

I COME now to a stage in my story which I would gladly omit, or at least touch upon very lightly. It relates to myself and my connection with the Carol family. That connection, it is true, is sufficiently close and important to make some reference to myself indispensable. I am, nevertheless, strongly of opinion that a far less detailed account would better tend to maintain the harmonious proportions of the narrative, while it would certainly be infinitely more agreeable to my own feelings, to say nothing of those of my readers. Having, however, a coadjutor in the task, and that one whom my readers will assuredly recognize as entitled to dictate, being no other than the daughter of Christmas Carol, backed by powerful friends, —I find myself overruled, and compelled to submit. When I state that I persevered in my opposition until sundry chapters of my own biography had been actually composed for me—the said chapters being altogether monstrous and impossible, being the work of one far too favorably disposed towards me to be critical—I trust my readers will consider themselves fortunate in having only this modicum of egotism thrust upon them.

In following my avocations as a student in the library of the British Museum, it happens occasionally that I come across old books of imaginative fiction, in which the writers have set down their views of the condition of society when civilization should

have advanced far beyond the stage reached in their own day. English, French, German, and American writers all tried their hand at such forecasting of the future; but, ingenious as were their attempts, there is one respect in which their sagacity was wofully at fault:—most of all so in those of France, where ecclesiasticism and political organization bore greatest sway; and least of all so in those of America, where individual freedom most prevailed.

The error of these prophets consisted in their regarding physical science as destined to dominate man to such an extent as to destroy the individuality of his character, and mechanise his very affections. It is true that the writings to which I am referring belong principally to a period when the human mind was yet so much under the influence of rigid inflexible systems of thought in religion, politics, and society, as to make it very difficult for men to realize the true nature and functions of the new power which was to regenerate the earth. They thought that in exchanging Dogma for Science they would merely be exchanging one hard master for another. As it had ever been the aim of Dogma to crystalize, if not to suppress, all the humanity of human nature; so it would, they supposed, be the business of science to deprive character of individuality, and life of contrast and variety, by making all men alike, and converting the world into one vast Chinese empire. My story will have failed in respect of at least one of its main ends, if it does not enable my younger readers to see that under the reign of Science, Civilization has come to consist, not in the suppression, but in the development of individual character and genius, to the utmost extent compatible with the security and convenience of the whole mass.

It is by many a bitter experience that the world has learnt that systems of organization are no substitute for personal development. The Ruler, whether he wields the sceptre, the lash, or that yet more dire instrument—spiritual terror—is, until the principle of Fear be discarded altogether for that of Knowledge, but a driver of slaves who will some day break out into disastrous revolt. If I have dwelt much on the Emanci-

pation and its great achievement—the liberation of the National Church from its dogmatic basis, and the consequent preservation of its organization, prestige, and resources to the State—it is because this was the event which alone rendered truly rational education possible in England; the event which, by combating and ultimately defeating the spirit of *Jesuitism* in all its various manifestations — ecclesiaticism, communism, socialism, and trades-unionism—and so destroying from among us the love of drilling and dictating to our fellows, and of making ourselves a rule to others, constituted the basis of all our subsequent advances. So long as the State supported this spirit in the Church, it was powerless against its action in society. Our unreserved acceptance of the axiom that the prime function of government is the maintenance of liberty, religious, political, social, and industrial, was indispensable to the fulfilment of the modern era. The too long deferred assumption by Government of the functions of the *Policeman*, strong, energetic, and ubiquitous, was the death-blow to the tyranny alike of priest and parent, peasant and artisan.

Then for the first time in the world's history was a people really free, free to think, to speak, to work, to win, and to enjoy; free from every tyranny,—saving one.

Saving one: for there was, and is, an exception to the rule of entire freedom; an exception founded in the very constitution of our own nature, even the tyranny of the Affections,—a tyranny requiring, not less than any other, the restraint of a developed intellect. What mattered it to me that I dwelt in the land of liberty, where the whole order of society was contrived expressly to secure my freedom, when feelings which were a part of myself, and from which I could not escape, demanded the sacrifices which cost me so dear? What mattered it that the law of the land would have justified my evasion from all family ties, on the plea that I had a right to my own soul, and that my soul, thus bound, was not my own, when the law of affection within me compelled me to remain, even at the price of my utter self-annihilation? Useless indeed, in such case to argue that the individual *ought* to assert himself,

and be true to the lights vouchsafed to him. The only comfort possible for those who have not the resolution to declare themselves in you, and sever the connection ere it has become confirmed by time, consists in looking forward to a day when the progress of enlightenment shall have involved even parents such as those now in the Remnant, and when the inalienable right of children to their own souls shall be fully recognized by the most indomitable sectarian. It is to my former associates of the Remnant that I say this, on the chance of my pages finding admission within those adamantine walls. Those who are of the Emancipation need it not. They have already long since recognized it as a sacred duty to encourage their children to form and follow their own judgment in all matters of opinion, and in all their professions to put Conviction before Compliance. It is thus in reality as well as in theory, that the Emancipation repudiates the world-old practice of human sacrifice.

How my own eyes were first opened, and how I first met Christmas Carol at the Alberthalla—two events which are always associated together in my mind—have already been related. My story brings me now to the time when the acquaintance thus begun was to bear its due fruit.

It may seem strange that I had failed to recognize one in whom my family had so special an interest. The fact is that, although in my childhood I had heard my father speak of an adventure which had happened to him in his youth in connection with an iceberg and an infant, the story had, through my mother's reticence, faded into a dim tradition.

It was about eight years after that first meeting before I again saw him. In the interval I had become a man, and his name had grown familiar to me as that of one of our most honored citizens, and not less remarkable for his origin and wealth, than for his character, genius, and achievements. Since our first meeting I had always kept him vividly before me, watching, though from a distance, every movement in which he bore a part. I longed intensely to know more of him, but was withheld by my constitutional shyness and a not unjustifiable

pride, from making any approach. There would be naught, I felt, between two men placed in positions so different, save favor from one and obligation from the other.

Besides, the exclusiveness of my family ties operated as an impassable barrier to detain me from the great outer world. I had, at the time of which I am now speaking, a twofold object in life, namely, to keep from my mother the knowledge both of the change which had come over my religious opinions, and of a serious reverse of fortune which had befallen me. Each of us had derived from my father an income sufficient for all our moderate wants. But I, being ambitious of something beyond this, had put my money into speculative investments, and lost it. My mother's income was untouched, but it sufficed only for herself. I hardly knew which intelligence would most grieve her, the loss of my money or the loss of my religion; for I was far from being convinced that her piety was of that unpractical sort which leads some persons to regard spiritual prosperity as a satisfactory counterpoise to temporal adversity. However, either would cause her acute agony, and embitter the remainder of her days. I determined, therefore, to make no apparent diminution in the cost of my living, but to earn the means by steadfast labor. Even here my adherence to the Remnant stood in my way. I could not look beyond our own circle either for the objects or for the rewards of my work. All must be done within the narrow limits of the Sect, or my labors would be regarded as unhallowed, and myself as reprobate. Even in making excuses for my newly found faculty of industry, I was forced sometimes to sail so near the wind as to feel very uncomfortable at the deceit I was practising. It was only by persuading myself that the bigotry in deference to which I was acting, was a sort of madness, and that it is lawful to deceive a madman for his own benefit, that I managed to reconcile myself to the necessity. If I committed a wrong in thus acting, the compensation must be found in the motive that prompted it. It was solely to spare my mother the misery which a knowledge of the truth would have caused her.

That she ought not to have experienced unhappiness at my

following my own judgment, and asserting my own individuality of character, I am well aware. But it is a fixed idea among parents in the Remnant, that they are so infallibly right in their own notions respecting all things, that their children are hopelessly lost if they venture to differ from them. So saturated are they with a sense of the Absolute, as to have no comprehension whatever of the Relative. It may be asked why, when I had learnt to rejoice in my new-found liberty of soul, I did not seek to make my mother a sharer in my joy. The answer is easy. I did not think she would be damned for not believing as I did. Whereas she was certain I should be damned for not believing as she did. I could not be guilty of the cruelty of letting my mother know—at least in this life, where I could prevent it—that I was to be damned.

I preferred that she should think me stingy. I know that she thought I had become unreasonably economical, and absurdly industrious. I know, too, that she feared the effect of my devotion to my work on my soul's prospects. Absorbed in worldly labor, I was apt to be withdrawn from God. This was a favorite notion in the Remnant. All doing was so likely to be wrong-doing, that they held it better to do nothing than run the risk of doing wrong. My art underwent a change. The demand for paintings of sacred subjects being confined to our own sect, the sale was too small to answer my purpose. Besides, I had become tired of producing them. With my emancipation from bondage I had learnt to recognize the beauty and sanctity of humanity and its affections. I painted a series of tableaux illustrative of my new phase, but unfortunately was not sufficiently careful to conceal them from my mother's watchful eyes. She reproached me for venturing so near the "broad path." I took them to the publishing office of an Art and Literature Association of high standing, and whose agent I had heard well spoken of. Telling this man my business, I enjoined him to keep my name absolutely secret.

He was greatly surprised at the request, and said it was quite a new thing to him that an artist should refuse the fame of his work. "Was it diffidence?" he would venture to ask, "be-

cause there was sufficient talent in the drawings to render such a sentiment misplaced."

I told him that my reasons were connected with private family circumstances, which, while they induced me to work for pay, compelled me also to work unknown—unknown, that was, to my relatives.

"Your work would be much more valuable," he said, "with a name to it."

I replied that I was aware of that, but for the present, at least, must be content to be a loser to that extent. Of the two, *fames,* not fame, must be my lot for the present.

He explained to me that he was only a publishing agent for an Association of Authors, and that it would be necessary to submit them to a committee. "We never," he continued, "issue any works unless it appears to us to possess a certain amount of merit, and likely to be acceptable to some class of society,—what class does not matter to us. Our *imprimatur* being sufficient to insure us against loss, we are able to publish everything at our own risk, taking only a small percentage of the profits to reimburse outlay and expenses. And as artists do not care to quaff their wine out of the skulls of their brethren, the rest goes to the author."

I left my work with him, and a few days afterwards received a note saying that the committee had been struck not only by the originality and execution of the designs, but also by the continuity of idea existing between them, and were willing to publish them in a volume, if I would provide a story to which they might serve as illustrations. But a name must be attached, though not necessarily the real name.

To this I consented, and adopting a pseudonym, set to work in the new direction. I was by no means satisfied with the result, but the committee and their agent were. The time thus occupied, too, was so long, for I got on but slowly, that only the hope of succeeding in laying a foundation for future success reconciled me to the privations I was forced to undergo rather than get into debt for my living. My mother noticed my loss of appetite at home. I led her to believe I had eaten

something while out. I really had lost my appetite, for I was sick and harassed with delay and apprehension.

The publication paid for itself, but brought me little beyond some favorable notices in the press. The agent, however, assured me that I had made a good beginning, and my future work would be sought for, and encouraged me to persevere in both lines. In the meantime I was at my wits' end to keep up appearances at home. My clothes became too shabby for me to appear at the social gatherings of our set; and I had to make every decent excuse I could think of for not accompanying my mother to the place of worship where alone, in her view, a soul could gain a certainty of safety.

My physical strength became so reduced, that my mind was affected also. I actually envied those who had none to grieve over them if they committed suicide. The object of all my endeavors being to save my mother from sorrow on whatever score, suicide was one of the last things I could, consistently, contemplate.

One day I called at the publishing office, and told the agent that if he could not dispose of the originals of my drawings I would take them home. He said that some enquiries had lately been made by a person who would only purchase them on condition of knowing the artist's real name. He added, with a somewhat singular expression of countenance, that if he were in my place he should think twice before refusing the terms. But that, of course, pride must be paid for.

"Pride!" I exclaimed. "Do you think it is pride that keeps me back? Listen, and I will tell you all."

He listened, and I told him all, even to how my mother lived in comfort, while I lived with her and starved, rather than let her know either that I had forsaken her creed or lost my own fortune. He seemed really interested, and said he had often heard of such a sect as the Remnant, but had no idea such narrowness could have survived to our day. After a good deal more talk, he repeated his advice to let him impart my name to the lady who had taken a liking for my drawings.

"A lady!"

"Yes, one of the *P. M.s.* And I assure you, you could not find a better set of patrons."

"*P. M.s!* And what may they be?" I asked.

"Ah, sir, I forgot. You have lived out of the world, and are not familiar with things that everybody else knows. The *P. M.s* is a colloquial term for the well-known heiresses' club, and means *Particular Maidens.* The members are all young ladies of fortune and station, who decline the association of merely fashionable and wealthy men, and make a point of looking out for young men, especially struggling ones, of genius and aspiration, either to adorn their club gatherings, or to bestow themselves upon in marriage. I assure you, sir, you may do worse than dispose of your works in that quarter—or yourself either," he added after a pause, smiling.

I was still so incompletely emancipated from the traditions of my sect, that I regarded all such associations of women with a considerable amount of repugnance. I knew what they would be if composed of such women as there were in the Remnant. While the idea of a marriage for money, or of being indebted to a woman for the means of living, excited my scorn and horror. I said as much to my friend, for such, since I had told him my story, I felt him to be.

He replied that there was many a nice woman who would be only grateful to a man whom she could love and esteem, for taking care of herself and fortune, and not consider that he was under any obligation to her.

I confessed that I myself had never been able to see why it should not be so, but that I had never yet discovered a woman whom I could credit with the possession of sufficient magnanimity to make such a position tolerable to a man's self-respect. "I consider," I added, "that the highest compliment that can pass between the sexes, is for a poor man to marry a rich woman. A man never credits a woman with such largeness of heart as when he puts it in her power to suspect him of having mercenary motives in his love."

I observed that as we conversed, he paused from time to time to write something, but without breaking the thread of our talk.

"Many a man thinks in the same way, while he is young," he said. "But I never knew one regret the money, however much he regretted his choice of a subject."

"Well," I said, "as I should marry only for the love that would make a home of my home, such an association as you describe would be to me a constant sore."

"The money would enable you to buy poultices."

"I am afraid my poultice would prove a blister," I answered, laughing, and departed, leaving my paintings for further consideration.

CHAPTER II.

The notion of combining whatever talents I possessed into a harmonious whole, became especially pleasing to me. I had always been a dabbler in verses, and now glanced through my portfolio to see if I had any which would bear illustrating. The artist who is not a mere imitator, I held, ought to be both poet and painter. There can be no reason why both modes of expression should not be united in the same work, as music with singing. I found some which suited me, and having illustrated them to my fancy, took them to the office. To my intense astonishment, the agent at once wrote me a cheque in payment, far exceeding anything I had dared to hope for, even after long waiting.

"Soul is up in the market just now," he said, smiling. "Always put soul into your work, and it shall be equally well paid."

"May I ask any questions?" I enquired.

"Nay, I cannot encourage such inconsistency in one who insists on being himself anonymous."

He then made me an offer for the originals of the illustrations already published. I gladly accepted it, and left his office with my head in the clouds.

The removal of one difficulty served to launch me into another. I could obtain payment provided I could work. But my mother's failing health made her terribly exacting in her demands upon my time. She could not bear that I should be away from her side; and to be with her meant to be idle, so far as any paying work was concerned.

At length, becoming worse, she was recommended to pass the summer at a favorite watering-place in Iceland. It was only by means of the money I had earned that I was enabled to accompany her. So we went, she little dreaming on how slender a chance my acquiescence had depended, and I shuddering at the narrowness of my escape from being compelled to reveal to her my poverty in justification of my refusal.

I had long wished to see Iceland,—that country without a fellow, in the fantastic peculiarity of its formation. I was curious to witness the giant contest between volcano and glacier; to live beneath a sun that, for the whole summer long, scarcely sets, and to know also what it was to breathe perpetual darkness. Modern physiologists had excited in me a desire to test, in my own person, the truth of their theories respecting the influence upon the human system of the prolonged presence or absence of sunshine. I was now to see it tested upon her in whom all my affections were centered,—even upon my mother, whom, for the heart complaint that was wearing her down, the doctors were sending to pass the summer in Iceland; for the new cure for such malady was sunshine. Patients not too far gone to be able to endure the journey, were believed to have been kept alive for years by shifting their position, every six months, from one Pole to the other, where Sanatoria had been made for their reception, the journey between being performed by air.

The physicians hesitated to subject my mother to the longer journey,—to the North Pole. Neither could she with safety travel by aërial conveyance. So we went by sea, in the Scot-and-Ice-land Ferry, and took up our abode on the northern shore of the island. I told the agent of my intended journey, and its cause, and of the satisfaction it gave me to be able to

devote the first proceeds of my new work to such an object. I said also that I feared my work would be sadly hindered by the interruption.

He expressed a contrary opinion on this head. I was just the man that ought to travel. No new scenes or experiences would be thrown away upon my work. Let me only give myself wholly up to nature, but "nature with a soul," he said, and I need have no anxiety on the score of success in art, whether written or painted. "In the meantime," he added, "if you can manage to send me any light or fugitive pieces struck off in the intervals of heavier and more permanent work, I will at once remit the proceeds to you. You must not be above the production of what the trade calls *Pot-boilers;* such things have a use above that which their name indicates. They are a relief and rest from more serious work, and enable the artist to return to it with increased zest. It is not given to mortals to live always up to the same high pitch. The tension must be loosened sometimes. The universe is not peopled exclusively with archangels. The artist, as well as the ordinary man, must relax his morals. In other words, he must condescend to consider what other people think and like, as well as what he himself thinks and likes. Granted that he stoops in so doing; well, self-abasement, in moderation, may be a judicious alterative. It has often happened that in stooping, he has stooped to conquer. Let me give you an instance. Once upon a time, somewhere, I believe, about the beginning of the Emancipation period, there was an author who had expended himself in elaborating his highest ideals of faith, and art, and life, for the elevation of his countrymen. His work was admired by all, read by many, enthusiastically praised by some, but bought by so few (for they were books of instruction, rather than amusement), that the author himself was in a fair way to starve; for, like you, he had hazarded and lost the fortune he had in possession when he started on his literary career.

"Well, he determined to make the public not only admire and praise him, but *buy* him. So he set to work and wrote a tale, which, while outwardly affecting to illustrate all the ex-

cellencies of his country and times, was in reality a bitter satire upon the follies and shams of society. The rich bought it because they found in it an apotheosis of *Dives;* the poor, because it exalted Lazarus. The sceptical bought it because it exposed the fallacies of the priests; the pious, because it upheld the Church and respected religion. The Materialists bought it because it represented matter as the basis of the mind; the Spiritualists, because it described mind as pervading and shaping matter. The old bought it because it gave them ground of hope for an hereafter; the young, because it bade them make the best use of this world, without reference to a life beyond. The men bought it because it bantered the foibles of women; and the women, because it upheld their claims as against the men. The ignorant bought it because they could understand every word in it; and the learned, because it contained an esoteric meaning discernible only by themselves.

"So the money poured in, and the author became rich; but the richer he became, the more ashamed he was of himself and of his kind. He had at last won success, but at the expense of his ideal. Was Satan, then, he asked himself, really the god of this world, and the human conscience but a delusion and a snare?

"Now mark the moral. By thus making himself, as it were, 'a little lower than the angels'—by condescending, I mean, to an ideal more closely approximating to that of the general—he had *caught the public*, and established a *rapport* which resulted in creating a demand for his earlier writings scarcely inferior to that for his later one. As the teacher of a new faith may work vulgar miracles to draw the attention of the crowd to his pure doctrines, so his higher work had been advertised by his lower. I make you a present of the hint; and wish you farewell."

"One word," I said. "What was the title of his successful book? I have much faith in titles."

"As it consisted," he replied, "of ideas already floating, more or less vaguely, in men's minds, and flattered the most

popular feelings, it was very appropriately called, *In the Air; or, Made to Sell.*"

The early part of my sojourn in Iceland, was passed in making acquaintance with the natural wonders of the island. Now that I had the most invigorating of all diets—Hope—to animate me, I could yield, without reserve, to the elation produced by the bracing airs and strange scenery. My mind, thus renovated, rose to new inspirations, in which the ordinary and the commonplace seemed to me to have no part. I had one great work on hand, partly literary, partly artistic; but I did not fail to follow the advice I had received, and send home from time to time the stray sparks which were struck out in its elaboration. Yet in these I did not consciously derogate from the high ideal to which I had devoted myself. And I was most thankful to be spared the necessity for doing so. My publisher was true to his word, and thus I was enabled to live in comfort, and even to provide my mother with little luxuries which had otherwise been unattainable. It seemed to me as if some good genius must have been watching for my arrival at the lowest depth of despair, in order to seize the moment and make it the turning point of my destiny.

On one point I was somewhat uneasy. I had, in one of my moments of depression, made a rough draft of an advertisement, containing an appeal for aid on behalf of a student of art, who, having lost his own fortune, desired the means of continuing his career, if any could be found to support him until success should enable him to repay them. It was not so much that I seriously thought of sending such an advertisement to the papers; I had drawn it up merely to see how it would look when written.

This I had lost, and for some time I was under an apprehension that my mother had found it. Even when I at length ascertained that this was not the case, I continued to be uncomfortable at the idea of its having got into strange hands. I shrank from the thought of such a revelation of myself.

At first my mother seemed to derive benefit from the change.

But towards the end of the summer she was so decidedly worse that I felt convinced the end could not be far off. I now found myself in a very curious frame of mind. Tenderly attached as I was to her, and ready to devote myself utterly to the promotion of her recovery, I was constantly pondering whether her recovery would be the best thing that could happen either for herself or for me. The more I hated such a line of thought and drove it from me, the more it persisted in haunting me. It was only by resolutely refusing to regard them as my own thoughts, and treating them as thoughts naturally occurring to a disinterested bystander who might be weighing all the pros and cons of the situation—much, in short, as Providence itself might be supposed to do—that I kept myself from being made exclusively miserable by them.

One fact I could not hide from myself. For our lives to be perfectly happy it was necessary that my mother and myself be in perfect accord, without any concealments. I knew the fatal influence of the system of intellectual suppression pursued in the Remnant, too well not to be aware that a change on her part was absolutely impossible. All intellectual independence was regarded as the result of worse than moral depravity. And the knowledge that I had come to certain conclusions which did not coincide with her own traditional ones, would be accompanied by the conviction either that I had been changed at nurse, or that she had given birth to a child of wrath, with whom she could have neither part nor lot in the future world.

But, however potent my motive for deception, and however merciful to her my resolution, I could not be blind to the fact that such habit of deception was far from agreeable to myself, or favorable to my moral health; and also that it was very doubtful how long I should be able to maintain it. Determined as were the efforts of the Remnant to shut out every gleam of light coming from the outer world, they could not always succeed in preventing names and deeds and words of note from penetrating into their retreat. The literary agent knew my name, if nobody else did, and so long as it remained a small name, would probably keep it secret. But what if it grew to

fame? Was my whole career to be sacrificed, and I sink to lower aims and lower work, for the express purpose of eluding fame lest my name might reach my mother's ears?

It was thus a singular conflict of opposing feelings to which I was at this time a prey. The very consolation I derived from success was embittered by the thought of the pleasure my mother was losing through her inability to sympathize in that success. I learnt then that the concealment of our joys from those to whom we are profoundly attached, is far more grievous to endure than the concealment of our sorrows. If grief is halved by sympathy, assuredly joy is more than doubled.

That in the event of my mother's death, her income would become mine, was a motive which, I rejoice to say, scarce thrust itself at all before me. It was only my resolute resolve to drive all such canvassings away as the snares of an enemy, and combine to the very best of my ability, my work with her health and comfort, that carried me through this distressing period, and when at length she departed, prevented my having any feeling regarding myself, save the satisfaction of having sacrificed myself to the utmost for her.

Her death was doubtless accelerated by the unusually severe climate of that season. As I have since learnt, it not unfrequently happens that large masses of ice become detached from the coast of Greenland and drift across to Iceland, where they form into a compact body, and for the time utterly ruin the climate of the island. This was the case in the year that we were there. What we ought to have done was to go on to the clear warm seas at the Pole; but my mother could not or would not make another move. Even the homeward passage by sea was closed by the ice, and it was useless to propose to her to travel by air.

After her death my grief and sense of isolation were very keen. She had many friends and I had many acquaintances in the Remnant. But from all these I was now cut off. I was not one of themselves, and did not intend to claim a place among them under false pretences. That was over for me. But elsewhere I knew not where to seek for a friend, scarcely

for an acquaintance. The ordinary engrossments for men of my age, love and marriage, were beyond the reach even of my dreams. Putting all my work aside, I allowed the Arctic winter that was closing in upon the isle to enshroud my spirits with a more than Arctic dreariness. A volume of narratives of the Arctic explorations of old times—when men were forced to content themselves with traversing the surface of the earth without cutting the knot of their difficulties by soaring into the air—helped to beguile but not to cheer those dark days. Having some of my father's papers with me, I chose that season for looking through them. Among them I found some lines indicating that he, too, had vividly realized a like situation, aided no doubt by his recollections of his own early adventure. The lines in question had been suggested by the story of an explorer who had lost the whole of his comrades, and remained prisoned fast for successive years from all possibility of returning to his home and his love. It is, however, less for any intrinsic quality than for their connection with our story, that I have thought fit to insert them here, and consented to do the same with those of my own which follow:—

> "As Arctic voyagers muse upon the zone
> Wherein they gathered up their sunny youth,
> And glow again amid the chilling scene—
> A brief relapse of joy, when pent among
> Those everlasting solitudes, to think
> The sun still shines afar, but not for them,
> And ne'er for them may shine: to know that soon
> Those joyless seas may be a burial place
> From which their frozen souls will hardly mount;
> Or should they chance to 'scape their shattered bark,
> 'Tis but to drag a drear existence on,
> A Lapland life instead of genial home—
> Thus must I lead a dull inferior lot,
> No warmth without, but that one fire within,
> Cherished as life from the surrounding cold."

When I resumed work I illustrated these lines—supplying the sun's absence by an electric-lamp—and forwarded the result to the literary agent by aëromotive, a regular service being

maintained throughout the year. I could not make up my mind to return home myself, simply because I felt that I had no home to return to, and was not yet equal to the task of seeking for one. I was not unhappy; for the release from the constant anxiety and concealment of my later years, operated to balance my sense of bereavement. Moreover, my mother had been spared the pain of knowing that I was an apostate. If, where she was now, the knowledge had reached her, she would with that knowledge, know also the sanctity of the instinct and the resolve which had guided me. For do not the dead see things "with larger other eyes?"

The keenness of my sensations under my new position, and the weird wildness of the country, brought me several inspirations which I duly turned to account, never failing to receive immediate and satisfactory returns. I thus came to welcome any occurrence which afforded me a vivid idea, that might be both poetically and pictorially expressed. It was an additional satisfaction to me to find that some of my lines were deemed worthy also of musical expression; and that, through the same kind agency, I gained an advantage from their publication as songs.

I mention these details by way of leading up to an incident which not only provided me in the first instance with a subject for illustration, but ultimately affected the whole tenor of my life.

The summer sojourners in Iceland had all taken flight. I thought myself the sole stranger in the island. My principal delight after the day's work was over, was to go down to the shore and watch the masses of ice growing into bergs, as by the pressure of the ice fields which now extended far beyond the horizon, it was forced up into conjunction with the glaciers which descended from the mountains. The aspect of the fantastic shapes, and the strange groaning and travailing of the massive crystal, as if in the throes of a new birth—the whole at times transparent with magical light of blue or green, or glistening and crackling as it reflected the gleams of the Aurora—exercised a fascination which I found it hard to shake off.

The natives, either from use or from dulness, were insensible to the scene; and my enjoyment therefore was wont to be a solitary one.

One evening, however, I detected a figure moving on the ice at a perilous distance from the shore. After watching its movements for some time, my eyes became sufficiently accustomed to the dim light to perceive that it was a woman. Now and then sounds reached me as of one declaiming, and the idea was borne out by the motion of the arms. She passed near me on her return to the shore, but without perceiving me, and to my surprise I recognized her as one of the visitors of the past summer; an exceedingly lovely girl of some eighteen years of age, whose variableness of expression had often struck me, when I had passed her walking with her companion, a fair handsome middle-aged lady.

The aspect of this girl produced on me the impression that she was suffering from some heart-affection, but not of the kind for which a sojourn in Iceland is commonly prescribed. When her thoughts were diverted from herself, it seemed to me, no maiden could be more bright and gleeful. Absorbed in contemplation, she was the picture of woe.

After seeing that she had returned safe to her dwelling, I suffered my imagination to dwell on her, and her strange manner and reckless action; and to frame an hypothesis which found vent in the following verses.

A maiden stood on a sunny shore,
  Where the waters rippled brightly,
And tender breezes gently bore
  The song she sang so lightly.
"Dance as thou wilt, oh happy sea!
My heart leaps up in gladder glee,
Far brighter rays within me shine,
Than gild that dazzling breast of thine!"

A woman stood on the rocky shore,
  Where the waves were driving madly,
And scarce was heard amid their roar,
  The strain she poured so sadly.

"Rave as thou wilt, oh, driven sea,
Thou canst not match my agony:
On sharper rocks than thou dost know,
My all of joy is dashed to woe."

Again, beside the ice-bound shore,
Where the ocean, frozen, slumbers;
The wintry breezes slowly bore
Her low and measured numbers.
"Freeze to thy depths, oh marble sea;
This heart will colder, harder be!
Nor sun, nor wind, again can move
My stricken soul to life or love."

Having illustrated these verses, making for the last one a fac-simile of the scene I had witnessed, and which had suggested them, I sent my work home; but could not so easily dismiss this lovely, and evidently unhappy, girl from my mind. I sought for opportunities of seeing her close. I ascertained the name she and her companion were known by, but it was strange to me. So far as was apparent, they were mother and daughter, in retirement for the daughter's health.

My glimpses of them were but rare, and the scene on the shore was not repeated. However, I saw the young lady close enough and often enough to become deeply impressed with a sense of her beauty and worth. Whether or not I was absolutely in love, I do not undertake to determine. I tried to think that I was not, but that only my fancy was touched, for the idea of coining my heart into money was infinitely repugnant to me. I have reason to believe, however, that the most popular able-book in London, and particularly in the Triangle, before that winter was over, was one which contained the two sets of verses just given, with illustrations in which the color-printers had admirably seconded the artist's designs; and also a third set, upon the significance of which the reader may form his own hypothesis; the whole volume being entitled *Winter Reminiscences of an Artist in Iceland.*

Why haunt me when I know thou dost not love me?
Why haunt me when thou never canst be mine?

'Tis not thy bliss to fill the air above me
With gleams of visions false e'en while divine.

Why wilt thou still diffuse thy look and tone
O'er every spot my wand'ring footsteps seek?
Why leave me not to tread my path alone,
Unwatched by eyes of thine, so pure and meek?

Yet, no, I cannot with thine image part,
Or cease with thoughts of thee my soul to fill.
Thou dost not love me, perfect as thou art;
But I love ever, therefore haunt me still!

CHAPTER III.

On my return to England, I took up a temporary abode in the *Intellectual quarter* in London, and removed thither all my effects, thus completely forsaking both the neighborhood and the associations of the Remnant. I was enabled to do this without regret, regarding, as I did, that sect as the cause of all the miseries of my life, foremost among which stood the barrier erected by their superstition between my mother's soul and my own. Regarding, I say, this sect as worshippers of a demon, and believers in human sacrifices, sacrifices of minds and consciences, if not of body, I was not disposed to endure the remonstrances which my apostacy was sure to evoke from my mother's friends. As I had no notion of letting my purpose be affected by anything they might say, I thought it best to escape the annoyance of listening to them, by holding myself altogether aloof.

But, while thus abhorring the system to which I had been subjected, and resenting the unhappiness it had caused me, I found myself hesitating to declare positively that the evil had, in my case, been an unmixed one. I fancied that I could trace the development of anything that might be valuable in my

disposition or character to the hard training I had undergone in the conflict between duty and affection. But though, for me, from evil had been educed good, it did not follow that I should be kindly affected towards the evil. Besides, might not the character which was capable of such alchemy, have been, under other and more favorable conditions, far more advantageously developed.

I said something of this kind one evening, when in conversation with a little group of men whom I met in the salon of the Triangle. My friend, the literary agent, was a member, and on my returning to England free from all motive for concealment, he introduced me to the Club as a visitor. The evening in question was the first I had ever passed in society that was congenial to me. I was so little accustomed to the ways of the living world, that, while observing with all my eyes, and listening with all my ears, I scarcely ventured to exercise my tongue. In fact, I felt very much as I imagine one to feel who, after being blind for years, first opens his eyes upon the things around him.

But the kindness I met with when it was known that I was not merely the artist of several of the favorite books then lying on the salon table, but one of the family of Wilmers who had been so long and favorably known in the Triangle as the close friends of the Avenils, and their early associates in the guardianship of the young Carol, whose name had since been in the mouths, and whose character in the hearts, of all men,—the kindness I hereupon met with broke down all my diffidence and reserve, and made me feel that at last I had come among my own kind. A stray soul welcomed to bliss by sympathizing angels, could not feel otherwise than I did on that ever-to-be-remembered evening.

The group to which I had been introduced consisted of my host, Lord Avenil and some of his sisters, the son of Mistress Susanna, a fine young fellow of nearly my own age, who bore his mother's name, and another, who at first sat writing at a table near us, and to whom my host said he would presently introduce me.

Young Avenil apologized for the absence of several of his aunts and cousins, who he said would otherwise have made a point of being present to welcome me, but were under an obligation to attend in some distant town at the opening of a new Triangle, of which they were the architects and decorators.

The questions with which I was plied respecting the history of my family since their secession from the world to the Remnant, and the nature of the life led by the sect, gave me plenty to say without betraying my ignorance of things in general. It seemed to me that the man who sat at the writing table, though apparently intent on his occupation, was not unobservant of our conversation. His face was in shade, and I could not discern his features, but thought that I could now and then *feel* a gleam, as from lustrous eyes, resting upon me.

I had, in reply to their friendly curiosity, been describing the feelings with which I now regarded the sect from whose blighting influences I had effected my escape, very much in the terms I have set down a little above. The stranger had caught my words, and apparently found some chord in his nature struck by them. For the first time he joined in the conversation, saying, without a word of ceremony,—

"Your own nature has divined the spell with which once upon a time I found myself obliged to conjure away the demon of negation for a young friend in circumstances not altogether different from your own. He, too, was an artist, but through ease of circumstances was idle and luxurious. He believed in the superintendence of unseen influences, and reproached them for not interfering to save his life from being wasted, but had not strength of resolution to make the necessary effort himself. Prayer, as you doubtless have often observed, is very apt to take the form of requiring another to do our duty for us. In the wantonness of idleness he took to gambling, and did not leave it until he had lost the whole of his fortune. He was now more than ever bitter against those whom he considered as the guardians of his fate. But he had not leisure to indulge his bitterness. Necessity compelled him to turn his hand to toil. I watched, but said nothing. His work succeeded, for it

was very good, and he made a name and a fortune. 'I have beaten the spirits,' he said to me exultingly. 'When I trusted myself to fortune they let it turn against me, and ruin me. I have re-made myself by myself! No thanks to my kind guardians!'

"'And you are happier now,' I said, 'than before your adversity?'

"'Happier and better. It has made me a man!'

"'And without your providential spirits having any hand in it?'

"'Why, they turned the luck against me,' he said.

"'But if you are so much better,' I asked, 'can you say the luck was really against you?'

"'Ah, I see!' he said, and added, 'It is a case, I suppose, of things working together for good. But I did not know that I could be called one who "loved God."'"

"And of course you suggested that perhaps the love was the other way," interposed Lord Avenil, addressing the speaker. "But, my dear Carol, do you know that that is the most immoral story I ever heard even you tell. It is a direct incentive to gambling. What will our new-found friend here think of the company he has got among. Come, I am glad you have done writing. I have been wanting to introduce you to the son of your earliest nurse, Lawrence Wilmer, in whose arms you were first dandled on the iceberg, and to whose ingenuity you owe your very name."

"I am glad you did not introduce us before," said the other, rising and advancing to me with the look in his eyes and over his whole countenance that I well remembered,—the look that perforce drew all men to him. "I am glad you did not introduce us before. The delay has enabled me to *wish* to know the son of my dear lost Lawrence Wilmer for his own sake, as well as for his father's. But you must know," he added, "that unless I am very much mistaken, this is not our first interview. Am I not right?" he said, addressing me.

"It is so, indeed," I said, "and that first interview has never left my memory. But I did not think our few moments' con-

verse in the Alberthalla could have enabled you to remember me. Besides, I was but a lad then."

"Ah," he replied, "I read souls, not faces merely. And I am disposed to think that though your face be older, your soul is younger than it then was."

The conversation which followed was of a kind the most grateful to me, making me feel that from an adventurer and an outcast, I had become a member of a family and a home. I was about to retire with the friend who had brought me, but was stopped by Carol, who said that he would take it as a great favor if I would accompany him to his own rooms, as he wished some further converse with me. He then walked some steps with the literary agent, and I heard him on parting from him say,—

"My dear sir, you have performed my commission to my complete satisfaction, and earned my warm gratitude. He seems all that you have described him."

Then rejoining the party, he said,—

"Avenil, you will forgive my appropriation of our friend for the rest of the evening. There is much that I wish to talk about with him. Indeed, you must not be surprised if I grudge a large share of him at all."

Thus I found myself installed more as a son than as a stranger in the private dwelling-rooms of Christmas Carol. The only change I noted in him was that he seemed at times less buoyant of manner and spirit than he had at first appeared to me, as if through the burden of some present grief. But this was only when silent. In conversing he was all himself.

To my surprise, what he took most interest in was my recent sojourn in Iceland. The few questions he asked about my previous life indicated a familiarity with it altogether unaccountable to me at that time. The incidents of my stay in Iceland, which had suggested the verses and illustrations already referred to, were the points on which he seemed specially anxious to gather information.

I told him all I had seen that bore on the subject, not concealing the sentiment which had been evoked in my breast. I acknowledged my ignorance as to how far love or compassion predominated in me. That the damsel was as pure and good as she was beautiful and sad, I declared that I had no manner of doubt, and should esteem myself fortunate could I have the privilege of consoling her.

He said that, artist-like, I had evidently constructed a complete romance upon a slender foundation; and that it would probably be better for my career as an artist, as well as for my happiness, were I to keep to my dream, and shun the reality. He added with a smile, which appeared to me to have in it more of sadness than of mirth, that he hoped I was not seriously smitten.

I replied that I did not think I was at present, but felt that I might very easily become so, inasmuch as I was singularly amenable to the influence of faces and voices, and had considerable faith in my faculty of divining character by them. I added that the conclusion which now seemed to me most probable, was that this young lady was suffering as much through her own act as through that of another, for I had read in her looks contrition as well as resignation; yet nevertheless, I was convinced that even if she had herself committed a wrong, it was not through lack, but through excess of heart; and I could forgive any act that had been thus prompted, no matter what it might be. "In the sect in which I was brought up," I added, "we profess to hold in high estimation a book which we are taught to believe is now-a-days little considered by any but ourselves,—not that we understand it, or get much beside harm from it. I have, however, always found a mighty significance in one of its utterances. It is this:—'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much.' My own people, following, I believe, some of the early Christian fathers, hold that this sentence ought to be expunged, as having an immoral tendency. For me, it contains the whole gospel. I cannot bring myself even to regard as sin that which is done for love, and not for self."

I suffered myself to be led on in this way, seeing that, so far from attempting to direct the conversation into another channel, he was at least content with the topic. To myself it was so great a relief, after my life of suppression and reticence, to utter my mind freely to one whom I intuitively recognized as capable of comprehending me, that I experienced not the slightest pang at such departure from my habitual reserve.

"We have left far behind us," he remarked, in an absent, meditative manner, "the times in which love and sin were commonly linked together in people's minds. Sin now-a-days is associated with breach of contract, or unfaithfulness, both being forms of selfishness. However imprudent an individual may be in yielding to the impulses of love, there is no sin unless some one be defrauded thereby, though, of course, there may be much inconvenience. This is now the popular and general sentiment on the subject, and humanity has gained infinitely in happiness since its adoption. Still, I can imagine a nature so constituted as to feel bitter mortification on the score of having ignored the judgment of those who were entitled to be taken into confidence,—a mortification that would constitute repentance, and make a second and like defect of conduct impossible."

I said that it seemed to me that the sentiment of mortification was scarcely possible, except in one who had previously regarded himself as infallible. That as I read life, it is a series of lessons from experience; by its very constitution involving error, even error moral as well as intellectual.

"The old contest," he said, manifestly speaking to himself rather than to me, "between experience and intuition. I have taught her to follow heart alone, even as I myself have followed it, and naught but sorrow has come of it, sorrow to both of us."

Here the clock seemed to have caught his eye, for he said, looking at it,—

"There will be no more signals to-night. I thank you for having given me your company thus late. To-morrow, if I am not making too great a demand upon you, I shall have matters of greater interest to impart to you. I quite long for the time

when you will become a resident with us. Avenil says it will be like old times to have a Wilmer once more in the Triangle. I wonder whether you will find in any of his nieces a charm to counteract your recent impression.

I left him after promising to return for breakfast, and having a sort of instinctive conviction that he knew more of me than he had said, or than I could comprehend, and that there was a relation between our lives scarcely to be accounted for by the fact of his having been first nursed by my father on the iceberg. His conversation also perplexed me. Though coherent in itself, it seemed to vary its object, and point sometimes to himself, sometimes to my own recent experience, and sometimes to some third person with whom his mind evidently was much occupied.

CHAPTER IV.

Breakfast was already prepared when I arrived at the Triangle next morning. But my host was engaged in an adjoining room, and I had leisure to look round the apartment into which I had been shown. It was the same that I had been in over night, a small and sumptuous chamber, evidently a favorite one, to judge from its comfortable home-like aspect, and the character of its conveniences and decorations.

Being an author and an artist, my first glances of course fell upon the books on the tables, and the paintings on the walls. I was pleased rather than surprised to find among the former my own little works. My feeling was one of blank astonishment, when, on going round the room, I found, carefully set up upon a stand by themselves, the whole of the originals of my published drawings, excepting the very latest ones.

While I was gazing in wonder at them, Christmas Carol entered, and apologized for his delay, saying that he was always at the mercy of his telegraphs, and required his friends to make

allowance for him. Perceiving what I was looking at, he smiled, and said that his daughter had been so much pleased with the first specimens she had seen of that style, that she insisted on purchasing the whole of the series. "I suspect also," he added, "that she was a little piqued by the artist's refusal to allow his name to be made known."

"Does she know it now?" I asked.

He said, "No;" and in answer to my question whether she was a member of the club known as the P. M.s, he said "Yes," but that she rarely availed herself of her membership, being of a somewhat too retiring and domestic disposition to feel quite at ease in the Common room of a club. "Poor Zöe," he added, "she has been very much out of health of late, and has caused me great anxiety. I should like to introduce my dear nurse's son to her. Can you spare yourself to me to-morrow for the day, to run down to my place in Surrey? She is staying there at present, with her stepmother. We shall find there one whose affection for your father will make him overjoyed to see you,—Bertie Greathead."

We agreed to start about noon; and in the interval I was made acquainted with so much of his history and pursuits as enabled me to comprehend his exact position, and feel that he was in no way a stranger to me. I was introduced also to the room in which he had been occupied when I arrived. It was a very large one, and entirely taken up with the machinery whereby he controlled the various works he had in hand. In addition to numerous telegraphs, there were surveys and drawings of various portions of the Sahara and the Mediterranean coast; with tables showing the exact progress of the work, and the areas already covered with water. So vivid were his descriptions of the various processes and details that I could almost fancy myself in the country itself, and a witness of his mighty efforts to raise half a continent to a higher stage of development, physical and moral.

About the man himself there was a simplicity and genuineness of character which showed him to be greater than all his works. I said something in reference to the tenets of my old

sect,—to the effect that his life was a refutation of their doctrine that the world was so much more fit to be damned than to be saved that only supernatural interposition could accomplish any improvement.

He replied that a work called divine, as Creation, if anything, is undoubtedly entitled to be, would fall very far short of deserving such an epithet unless it contained within itself the elements of its own improvement: but that, for his part, he had a strong objection to the use of such words as *divine* and *supernatural*, as being apt to mislead. People might as well talk of the super-divine origin of the Deity, as of the supernatural origin of Nature.

His reference to his second wife excited in me unbounded astonishment. Not that I had the slightest right to indulge such a feeling, but the whole aspect and character of the man were so strongly suggestive of steadfast, undying constancy to a cherished ideal, that I could not reconcile myself to the notion of his being married again. And I soon found myself fancying that he was of my mind in the matter, and had not succeeded in reconciling himself to it, now that it had been done.

I was somewhat disappointed to find that our excursion into Surrey was to be made by railway. I hoped to have gone in the famous Ariel. To my enquiry whether he was as fond of aërializing as formerly, he said that his enjoyment depended on his being free from anxiety. He could not bear to burden the light airs aloft with mortal cares and sorrows. "The soaring bird," he said, "is always joyous, whether he utter himself in song, or be mute in ecstasy. When he has griefs which will not be left behind, he refrains from making the ascent."

His longest journeys, however, compelled him to travel as of old, in his Ariel. He was expecting to make one shortly to Africa. The works, which had been so many years in operation, were now approaching completion. He would take me with him to see the first reunion of the Mediterranean and the Sahara, after their long divorce. Already so vast a quantity of fresh water had made its way through the excavations as to

form several considerable lakes, and many regrets had been expressed at the prospect of their freshness being destroyed by the introduction of the sea. The people who uttered these regrets, however, had no conception of the real magnitude of the contemplated results. Already, he said, had the elongated *Shary*, in its issue from Lake Tchad, formed a broad and deep channel almost into the heart of the Sahara, and deposited myriads of acres of rich alluvial soil at a level somewhat above that which would be reached by the new sea. The people of Timbuctoo, delighted with the result of the experiment, had themselves proposed to turn the surplus waters of the Niger into the desert. Even from the far off low-lying coast lands of Senegambia and Guinea, came the cry:

"Take our surplus waters, and relieve us of the perpetual curse of inundation and fever."

The emperor's engineers had reported that their portion of the work was fast approaching completion, and that the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Seas would soon mingle in the bed of the Desert. In the meantime, he added, the work of raising the people of Soudan above the reach of ignorance and superstition, has been wondrously facilitated by their contemplation of, and participation in, the vast physical operations in progress. Superstition being the product of man's ignorance of nature and of its capacity for being subdued and controlled, the sentiment soon vanishes in presence of a Science that teaches him that he is himself the appointed conqueror of nature. The people of Central Africa are now well advanced on the path which our own civilization struck out for itself.

My meeting with Bertie Greathead, whom we took in our way, was of the most delightful description. The kind-hearted old man seized upon every point about me that served to remind him of my father, and made me feel at once that my life was enriched by the acquisition of another genuine friend. He detained Carol for some minutes after I had parted from him, and then called me back to say I might always count on a home and a welcome whenever I chose to come that way, which be hoped might be often.

On reaching our destination, Carol's demeanor indicated more uneasiness than he had hitherto betrayed. As it certainly was not owing to any ill news he had received of his daughter from Bertie, I was at a loss to account for his manifest preoccupation ;—unless, indeed, it arose from the recollection of his first marriage mingling with reflections upon the second.

It must be remembered that at this time his domestic history was altogether unknown to me. That his second choice was a good one, whatever the first, might have been fairly augured from the handsome presence and gracious manner of the lady who met us at the door, and after affectionately embracing him, welcomed me, with an admirably proportioned admixture of precision and effusion. If in this first meeting there was anything that jarred on me, it assuredly was not on the side of the lady, but rather on that of her husband, whose manner struck me as colder and more restrained than was appropriate either to the occasion or to the persons concerned.

"Our darling Zöe," said the lady, amiably overlooking all defects, "would have rejoiced to unite her greetings with mine, but her sad health causes her to keep much aloof from society, —even from mine, though living in the same house. I do trust, my dear Christmas, that your visit will quicken her spirits somewhat."

"Where is she? Is she well enough to see us?" he asked, in a tone that betrayed no intention of being beguiled into using more words than were absolutely necessary.

"She is in her own apartments, and, of course, able to see her father," replied the lady, marking the last word with a strong emphasis.

"Then I will ask you, Amelia, to entertain Mr. Wilmer, while I go and see her. He is an author and an artist, and so will be able to appreciate your descriptive and creative talents."

Before he could leave the room, the door opened, and a young lady entered, and, running up to Carol, embraced him tenderly. She was tall and fair, but with dark, expressive eyes, and a somewhat Oriental cast of countenance, and about nineteen

years of age. Great as was her beauty, it struck me that the illness from which she was suffering must have enhanced it by the delicacy it imparted to her aspect.

Leading her towards me, her father said,—

"Zöe, I have at last captured the artist who refused to give you his name, and brought him to you, to be properly punished for his churlishness. But I must beg you to deal leniently with him, as he is no other than Lawrence Wilmer, the son of the lad who first nursed your father when on the iceberg."

As she advanced towards me, I fairly gasped. I had not recognized the elder lady,—her stepmother; but I could not be wrong in identifying Zöe with the subject of my dreams, poems, and pictures in Iceland.

Zöe, on her part, regarded me with a look of almost stupid wonderment, for which, as she could not by any possibility have recognized me, I was altogether at a loss to account.

Looking round in my bewilderment, my glance chanced to rest upon the face of the stepmother. The look of intense annoyance which I there beheld, did not serve to interpret to me the situation.

Quickly recovering herself, Amelia (for thus I shall take the liberty of styling her in future) said, in a voice but little corresponding with her recent expression of countenance, for it was bland to a degree:

"Dearest Zöe, are you not exceedingly rash to venture into the presence of strangers in your weak state? Do be guided by me, and retire to your own apartments until we are alone. Pray persuade her, Christmas, to take my advice?"

Neither father nor daughter took any notice of her pleadings; but Zöe came up close to me, and, taking my hand, said:

"We ought to have been friends long ago. Please let me date back and consider that we were so."

Then turning to her father, she said, still holding my hand:

"Now, papa, darling, I am going to take off my new-found old friend to talk with him all by myself. When you want us, you will find us in my room."

And she actually led me away without suffering me to raise

an objection against such abrupt desertion of the party. I caught, however, a glance of encouragement from her father, upon whose face there was a curiously mingled look of apprehension and gratification.

She did not utter a word until we had arrived at her own little drawing-room, and I followed her example. She told me afterwards that she liked me for that, as any other man would have talked all the way. Entering the room, she led me straight up to a picture-stand, on which stood some drawings which I was at no loss to recognize. They were my Iceland illustrations; one of them representing the incident of my beholding her out on the floe, making wild moan to the ice-locked deep.

"There!" she exclaimed, pointing to the stand, "I will say nothing to you, and hear nothing from you, until you have explained to me how you came to paint those pictures and write those verses."

Her eager look as she said this, impressed me with the idea that her mind was still suffering from the shock it had evidently received before her visit to Iceland. Doubtful how my answer would affect her, I led her to the sofa, and made her sit down before I satisfied her curiosity.

"I was in Iceland," I said, "at the same time that you were there."

"Then you saw me go out upon the ice-field to drown myself, and come back without having done so because I couldn't find a hole?"

"I must ask your pardon," I returned, "for the liberty I have taken in representing a scene which concerned you. Had it occurred to me that it would ever be recognized by one to whom it might give pain, nothing would have induced me to take it."

"You mistake me," she said. "Tell me how much you know about me?"

"I know nothing but what my own eyes showed me in Iceland,—that you were good, and lovely, and yet unhappy; and what I have learnt to-day,—that you are the daughter of the

most admirable of men, and one for whom I ought to have an hereditary friendship."

"You may add, and the step-daughter and sister-in-law of a white demon."

"What! You are married!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," she replied, sadly. "I was in too great a hurry. But I am going to be unmarried. My heart has no place for the false. Oh, what a fool I have been! Even my father does not know all, or nearly all. He has brought you to me to be my old friend. Your works revealed you to me as a friend who knew and understood me long before we met. Now that we have met, I have with you all the confidence of old friendship."

I pressed her hand for a moment, partly in order to assure her of my sympathy, and partly to calm her excitement; for I felt that she was not altogether herself. But I kept silence. Presently she continued,—

"You cannot imagine the relief it is to me to find one who can sympathize without chattering. Oh, that woman! with her sharp-cut lips and careful elocution! How could my father have been so blinded to her character! But he is not a man of the world,—I mean of this world; and her art was supreme. She got tired of practising it when married; or, rather, it was that she found it impossible to be a hypocrite every hour and moment, and marriage is such a revealer. But I am afraid it was all my doing. I wished him to marry her. Her kindness to me was so artfully contrived, that neither of us saw through it until the mischief was done. There was always something about her that jarred on us, though."

Not knowing what to say, I said nothing, but felt that her antipathy, whatever its object or its justice, was already shared by me.

"Nothing can give me back what I have lost," she continued, "or remove from my life the evil flavor of the past. Personally I shall be free, on that I am resolved, and my father will not refuse his consent, when he hears what I have to tell him, much as he hates divorces for any. The law allows divorce to those who are married under a false pretence. But how will it be

with him? It is true that there is virtually a separation between them, but I doubt whether even her vileness will suffice to reconcile him to a divorce for himself?

"What! is she not true to him?"

"True? Oh, yes, she is true to him, with all the constancy of a cold, hard nature, scheming ever for its own ends. Stay, you are Artist, and therefore Observer. Did you notice the color of her complexion and hair?"

"I was struck by their amazing clearness and brilliancy, but scarcely had time to note more."

"Do you attach any importance to coloring, in relation to character?"

"Yes, indeed. The addition or subtraction of a warm tint often makes all the difference between a true and kind heart, and a false and selfish one." And as I spoke, I glanced significantly at her hair, which was of the warmest brown and gold.

"Well, this woman has the cold white hue that belongs to the latter, in her yellow metallic hair and clear skin. Oh! the spectroscopists must be right, when they say that races and temperaments vary according to the metals which enter into their composition. For I am sure that an analysis of Amelia would reveal very strongly the lines indicating the presence of tin and copper, or whatever may be the constituents of brass. My mother had the rich warm auburn, though much lighter than mine. I know little of her, save that she had been reared in tropical Africa, and possessed a temperament so ardent and impulsive, that she found it impossible to tone herself down to civilization-point. I have been inclined to think that it was the very contrast that led my father to make this last selection. For I know he had much unhappiness in the first."

"Then his second marriage was scarcely one of mere affection?"

"He thought it was on her side, so well did she play her part. But he was as much influenced by gratitude, and consideration for me, as by any thought of himself. Oh, how I hate all the kindness she showed me, when I think of the calculating spirit which prompted it."

By the time we finished talking, I understood that Zöe and her father had been betrayed into alliances with Amelia Bliss and her brother George, who was much under her influence. The plan had been for the lady to ingratiate herself with Carol, by displaying such affection for Zöe, and such exquisite propriety of sentiment and manner, that he should think he could not entrust his daughter's education and introduction to better hands. During Zöe's childhood, Amelia had lived much at the house in Surrey, and at length, with well-feigned reluctance, and solely she declared for the sake of her darling charge, consented to become her step-mother. Even with the attainment of this great end, she did not at once throw off the mask, but waited until Zöe's affections had been won by her brother, and a marriage actually contracted. This latter event had taken place in Carol's absence in Africa, and without his knowledge or expectation, Zöe's feelings being worked upon by the brother and sister until they were beyond the control of her judgment. It was, however, only on receiving a message in approbation, purporting to come from her father, whom she worshipped, that she finally consented. The aim of all this scheming was, of course, Carol's wealth. Having secured, so far as was possible, a claim upon this, their caution relaxed. Zöe perceived that she was not loved for her own sake, and Carol found that the fair exterior and plausible demeanor of his wife were but masks to a hard and insincere nature. The first indication she gave of being other than she had hitherto appeared, was her reckless disregard of accuracy in ordinary conversation. To such a degree did she learn to carry this fault, that it was, I have heard, no rare thing for her audience to gaze from her to each other in wonderment, as with precise verbiage and ostentatious affability she poured forth utterances of which the falsehood was too apparent to be glossed over by any other term.

Indeed, she seemed at length to have no other conception of conversation than as a vehicle for boasting; and, regarding the slightest statement made by another as intended for a boast, she invariably endeavored in her replies to *cap* what had been said.

To complete my sketch, and dwell no longer than necessary upon a hateful theme, I may here add that, as the love of display grew with the possession of means to indulge it, there was no department of life in which she did not endeavor to outvie all who came into contact with her. The range and assurance of her conversation demonstrated her pretensions to universal knowledge; and no matter what the eminence of the scholar who ventured to correct her blunders, the attempt invariably terminated in a triumph for her, achieved by sheer force of assertion. So confident was she of the perfection of her own wit, that she allowed none of her attempts at humor to pass without being repeated until not a person present could escape knowing them by heart.

Her husband, after his first shock of amazement at the manifestation of these oppressive characteristics, strove hard to be blind and deaf to them. Observing with more pain than surprise the gradual withdrawal of his acquaintances, and even of his friends, from any society in which she was present, he endeavored to show her that such displays, even of knowledge, would be in the worst possible taste; but that when they were displays of ignorance, they were utterly intolerable to a refined and educated society. Her way of taking the rebuke revealed an innate vulgarity of soul that altogether sickened him; and in regard to anything that could be brought within the category of mere taste, he never repeated the experiment. His next remonstrance was evoked by her habit of indulging in utterances of the severest uncharity against any person whose reported conduct appeared to her to contain an element of ambiguity. It was with every nerve of his moral nature quivering with indignation, that he listened as she picked the characters of people to pieces, and ascribed bad motives for their conduct, or scoffed at all notions of mercy and forgiveness, even in cases where errors had been atoned for by years of repentance and well-doing. It was only when no longer able to bear the infliction, that he exclaimed,—

"Silence, woman! Do not further blaspheme God's creatures by finding only evil in them. Are you so conscious of perfect

rectitude in your own every thought, word, and deed, as to be secure in condemning all others?"

"I am sorry," she replied, "to find that you do not appreciate a pure and a faithful wife too well to address her in that strain. I will retire to my own apartment and leave you to your reflections. I cannot be humiliated by my husband, whom I only consented to marry for his own sake, and that of his—his—dear child. Oh! that I had retained my independence." And here she put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed, delicately.

"Hear me," he said, sternly, "and lay to heart what I say. It is no matter for boasting to have the physical characteristic you call purity, when every thought and word is an outrage against every virtue of the soul. Infinitely better is the ardor of the fire than the chastity of the iceberg, for with warmth there is a possibility of life; whereas, of the disposition you evince, there can come nought but utter death. My whole moral nature rises in revolt against the insincerity and hardness you seem to delight in exhibiting. Unless you amend, we must dwell apart."

It required all the knowledge I have since obtained of Carol's domestic history, to make me understand how such a monstrous union as this second marriage could ever come about. I can see now how that the very nature of the difference between poor Nannie and this woman contributed to mislead him. He had no fear of any rude impulsive outbreak on the part of Amelia; or of anything being said save that which was exactly the proper thing to suit the occasion. Actress at heart, cold, pitiless, and insincere,—many a less fine, less suspicious nature than Christmas Carol's might have fallen a victim to her wiles, even without undergoing the long and artfully contrived process of ingratiation, whereby the father was made to believe that in wedding her he was giving as mother to his daughter one thoroughly proved to be worthy of all confidence and affection.

My conversation with Zöe was terminated by the entry of her father, whose face bore an exceedingly grave expression. Zöe commenced pouring out her thanks to him for having

brought the very brother that she needed, but stopped on observing her father's face, and said to him in a whisper,—

"Has she been telling you?"

"My dear child," replied Carol, "I have come to take you and Lawrence to lunch. I hope I have not left him here long enough to tire you."

"Oh no," said Zöe, "he is just what I want my friend to be. He lets me talk on and on as wildly as my troublesome head prompts me to do. And when he speaks, it is all so natural and simple that it does not tire me in the least. So different from Amelia's fatiguing way."

On reaching the luncheon room we were received with a glance of the keenest scrutiny; but the voice and manner relaxed not a particle of their ordinary careful graciousness. In consequence of Zöe's remarks I paid particular heed to her stepmother's complexion, and was startled at noting the accuracy with which she had, so far as I could see, detected the secret of that lady's character. Probably the marvellous contrast between her own coloring and that of her foe, had unconsciously suggested the hypothesis. Zöe had, in addition to the pure auburn of her mother, just sufficient infusion of her father's darker blood to give a rich Oriental shade to her whole complexion. Her hair, as I have said, had a basis of gold, but verged on a deep warm brown; a hue which indicated a temperament that required all the larger brain she had derived from her father to balance the mighty impulses of her heart. She was manifestly of a rich and *roomy* nature; and incapable of a petty action or thought.

Amelia, on the other hand, had the aspect of one from whose veins all the blood has been drawn, and whose vitality is nourished only by a cold colorless lymph. Pondering on this peculiarity as we sat at table, and comparing the lady's manner with the account I had just heard of her character, I was suddenly struck by a certain look about her which at once suggested the idea that, though whiter of complexion than the Whites themselves, her blood was not purely white, but contained a dark infusion, probably of Hindoo or African.

Observing her closely, with this notion in my mind, I came to the conclusion that she was, either nearly or remotely, of Eurasian descent, that is, a cross between an European and an Asiatic. If this was the case, all was accounted for; and Carol had brought his misfortune upon himself, by failing to ascertain the breed with which he was allying himself.

The more I dwelt upon the characteristics of his wife, as described to me by Zöe, the more did I recognize the identity between them, and those which mark the race of half-castes that owes its origin to our ancient rule in India. The physical beauty and moral deficiency which are too apt to combine in persons thus derived, seemed to have united their extremes in the specimen before me. When once I had arrived at my hypothesis, every word, look and gesture served to confirm it. There was the cold eye, the hard, precise intonation, the watchful glance, the keen ear, the fawning flattering tongue, the head so flat at the top as to indicate the utter absence of a moral sense, but having in front strongly developed faculties of perception and imitation, and at the rear all its capacity for love centered on self, and perhaps on one of its own kind, but the latter through habit of association rather than through tenderness or affinity of character.

This, as I came soon to learn, was the nature of the bond between Amelia and her brother. He was the sole being, beside herself, for whom she cared; and their connection with the Carols was the result of a carefully planned and well executed conspiracy. The sister had, by arts already indicated, gained their entire confidence for herself. The brother was regarded by Carol with distrust, which, out of regard for his wife, he refrained from communicating to his daughter. But his absence in Africa was taken advantage of by both brother and sister, to effect against Zöe what in former times would have been stigmatized as a deliberate seduction. This crime, as an offence in the eye of the law, has with us no existence, each sex being, under their altered relations, held responsible for its own act. Morally, however, the blame rests entirely upon the side which takes advantage of the inexperience, and

warm feeling, and lack of protection, of the other, to obtain under false pretences that which would be denied were the facts fully known.

Zöe's horror on discovering that she had been deceived and betrayed, was based solely in her own moral nature. Her unhappiness on this score was sufficient without the added agony of the social stigma once attached to the hopeless victim of the seducer's arts. Society now-a-days accords to a girl under such circumstances, either a passing laugh of good-natured ridicule, or a smile of kindly compassion, and bids her be more careful in the choice of her next lover. Its serious reprobation falls upon the man. Thenceforth, he has no chance of getting a decent woman to accept him. The sex itself avenges its betrayed member. The fact that I am able to tell and publish this history of Zöe's first connection, without doing her fair fame the slightest injury, will, at least for those conversant with social history, indicate the enormous amelioration the position of women has undergone.

The fact that Zöe was an inmate of her father's house, and dependent upon him, imparted to her betrayal a degree of criminality which would be wanting in the case of a girl occupying a less private position. A woman who in early life goes forth from the parental roof to earn her own living and make her own home, avows thereby her readiness to take her chance in the conflict of wits, and an offence against her is not regarded by society with the same degree of reprobation as if she had retained the inexperience and helplessness incident to home nurture. There is the difference that exists between luring a lamb from the fold and pursuing wild game.

The bitterness of Zöe's feeling had been aggravated by her father's conduct when he returned from Africa to find his beloved child sacrificed to a man whom he deemed altogether unworthy of her.

"Could you not wait for my return," he asked, "before giving yourself up wholly?"

"Oh, my father," she had replied, "I could wait, but he could not. They told me you approved. I believed him to be good; and I—I—loved him."

This was enough for the tender parent. He set himself to make the best of it. Perhaps after all, he was prejudiced, and there was more good in Zöe's lover than he had allowed. He would ask him to come and live in the house, and give him a trial.

The test of constant companionship soon settled the question for Zöe as well as for her father. George Bliss manifested all the evil characteristics of his sister, with this addition,—he had not only basely treated a woman with whom he had been previously allied, but he had denied that any such connection had existed.

He was dismissed, Amelia vehemently protesting her own innocence of any intention to deceive, though owning that her regard for both parties had led her to desire and encourage their union. Zöe perceived, however, that the statements which had been made to herself did not correspond with those made to her father. But the question—who was responsible for the forged message which alone had procured Zöe's consent? —had remained undetermined. Worshipping her father as she did, the slightest hint of his disapprobation would have sufficed to keep her from yielding.

In their anxiety to be just to Amelia, father and daughter had somewhat receded from their position of hostility and distrust, and encouraged themselves to hope that the recent experiences would have a beneficial effect upon her character. It was while under the influence of this reaction that Zöe had made the trip to Iceland with her stepmother, during the summer that I was there. Since their return, Amelia's evil characteristics had reasserted their sway, with, if possible, more than the old intensity, reducing both father and daughter to despair.

The freedom with which I had been received by Zöe was altogether foreign to her character. Her mind, which had never recovered from its first shock, had just been excited afresh by a new discovery, which she intended on that very day to communicate to her father. She had been dreading the effect the intelligence might have in embittering his relations with

Amelia; and eagerly welcomed in me one whose presence might be of service. She had a twofold justification, she said, for at once trusting me wholly. There was the sympathy already revealed in my works; and the fact that her father had never introduced anyone to her in the way he introduced me. His whole demeanor had said to her, "Zöe, he is one of ourselves. Recognize in him a long-lost brother." Even long afterwards, when completely restored to health, she would have it that I must have regarded her behavior as deficient in proper reserve, and it required no little art on my part to soothe the distress she suffered on this score. Indeed, I doubt whether it was thoroughly cured until I had recourse to a somewhat extreme remedy. But of that it would be premature to speak now.

Amelia had hitherto, as I have said, received all the benefit of the doubt entertained as to her complicity in her brother's treachery. By Zöe's discovery, the doubt was removed. She had overheard in the garden a conversation between the pair, which convicted the sister of being the most culpable of the two, for it revealed her as the author and contriver of the plot, and forger of the false message. Zöe had resolved to relate the circumstance to her father on that very afternoon. It had been a question with her whether she should do so privately, or in her stepmother's presence. I advised the former, feeling that children, no matter of what age, should never be suffered to witness altercations, or even discussions, between their parents.

My advice was taken, and after lunch—which the scarcely suppressed excitement of Zöe, the anxiety of her father, who was ignorant of the cause of her manner, and the suspicious watchfulness of the stepmother, who struck me as looking on me as a possible obstacle to her brother's rehabilitation, made anything but a cheerful meal—Zöe took her father apart, and left me alone with Amelia.

I found myself haunted by an idea which kept recurring to me with increased force, namely, that Amelia was not altogether a stranger to me. But I could not recall a single circumstance in confirmation of it. However, we began to talk.

"The Blisses had a great name in India, once," I said.

"You are probably descended from the same distinguished family."

I wanted to obtain an admission of her connection with that country, with a view to verifying my theory of her Eurasian origin; but I was too clever and overreached myself. My ascription to her of a distinguished ancestry set her off on such a flight of glorification of herself and parentage, that I began to feel myself in the presence of one of the most elevated of human lineage. How many times her family had proved the salvation of our empire in Asia, how regal the blood which flowed in their veins, how vast the wealth they had lavished for their country's good, how wise and courageous the men, how beautiful and good the women, how eagerly sought their alliance in marriage, and how great the condescension of herself and her brother in consenting to associate with the ordinary folk of modern days,—on these and numerous other topics flight soared above flight until I was only saved from being overwhelmed by the augustness of the presence in which I sat, by suddenly recollecting that there was no necessity for believing a word she uttered. So well had she acted, that I had totally forgotten the character Zöe had given me of her. But now this came to me in all its force, needing no further confirmation. Christmas Carol married to an ingrained liar! There could be no greater tribute to her skill in mendacity, than that it had baffled his almost preternatural insight. I saw now the significance of his remark when commending me to her to be entertained by her creative and descriptive talents. It was a sarcasm! Christmas Carol become sarcastic! Here was another tribute to her powers. She had turned the sweetest of natures into bitterness. Truly he was right when he said that she revolted his whole moral being. Association with her was a moral suicide. I saw but one means of rescue for him. Under the old laws that would have been closed. They forbade divorce save as a premium on one sort of vice. Under them Carol would have been chained to this woman "until death did them part," all, forsooth, because she was "pure," or because he was so. Away with a word that can be used to describe two things so infinitely wide

asunder as the respective purities of these two. Worse than worthless is such purity of body where the whole nature is an incarnate adultery with all the powers of malignance. Amelia knew that Carol detested the notion of divorce, and that the soul of Zöe was the personification of constancy. This conviction was the rock upon which her confidence reposed.

Of course, a nature like hers could not realize its own exceeding hatefulness in Carol's eyes, any more than Carol could all at once comprehend the extent of her vileness. She was too keen, however, not to be conscious of the gulf between them. But she consoled herself by the reflection that in case the worst happened and she was turned adrift, it would be with a handsome competence to continue her career elsewhere. A man in Carol's position, and of his character, could not, she argued, throw over one who had held such relations with him, on any other terms, whatever her fault.

A message summoned me to Zöe's room. On my way, I met Carol, who was going to take my place in the conversation with his wife. His face told me that he now knew all, and had taken his resolution. His words charged me to endeavor to soothe Zöe's excitement.

CHAPTER V.

The same evening Carol, Zöe, and I returned to London. On the way, he apologized to me for having dragged me into his domestic affairs. He had been taken by surprise, he said, by the revelation which awaited him; but his daughter's discovery of the deliberate imposition which had been practised upon them, and of her step-mother's share it, left him no option but to act at once. Of course the scene had been a most painful one. For the first time the wretched Amelia had found falsehood fail her. All was over between the two families. He

had pensioned off his wife and his daughter's husband, on condition that they left him and Zöe absolutely free, and never again ventured within their range.

"And now, for the first time in my life," he said, "I thank God that he has made divorce."

Yet he presently added,—

"Had I thought it possible I could save her, I would have continued to endure, and not put her away from me. For a nature genuine and true, however narrow and perverse, I could bear all things. But pharasaic pretence and hollow conventionalism, however fair-seeming outwardly, revolt my whole soul."

She had owned, he told me later, that but for her conviction that he never would take that extreme step, she would not have presumed upon his forbearance, but would have continued to act her adopted character to the end.

She even had the effrontery to offer him at parting a piece of advice, telling him to be sure and keep her successor on her good behavior by making the connection one of limited liability only. "We women," she had said, "who, having neither fortune of our own, nor the ability or inclination to earn our own living by industry, are dependent upon men, are obliged to enact characters which are not natural to us; especially with such men as you, my dear Christmas, who are made to be cajoled. For we have no moral sense, as you call it, of our own, or at least, cannot afford to keep one; though we may affect to have one, and even to be guided by it, in imitation of you, that is, until we deem it safe to throw off the mask. Now that I have been so foolish as to lose you by throwing it off too completely, I suppose I shall have to resume it for a while. I must not let my next success intoxicate me in the same way. Not that I deem myself, or my brother, to have failed entirely. And I am sure you do not grudge our arms such little spoil as they have won for us?"

"Grudge it to you!" he had replied. "Oh, no. You are fairly entitled to every shilling of it. You have earned it hardly. Ah, how hardly! far more so than either of you know. May it prove a blessing to you! Farewell."

Before we quitted the train, the notion which had been haunting me about Amelia, made itself clear to me. I now recollected that she had in early life been a member of the Remnant, though not of my mother's circle. None had known why she had quitted it; but the gossip about her had implied that her perversion was due to her failure to obtain all the credit due to the devoutness of her demeanor. The character she had left behind was that of being a mere actress, who had taken up with the most formal ritual for the sake of the facilities it gave her for compensating the lack of sincere piety by an ostentatious parade of its outward appearance.

On my telling Carol what I had recollected about her, he said that she had, in the very beginning of their acquaintance, owned to him that she had abandoned the faith in which she was brought up, in consequence of the emptiness and unreality of its formalism; and claimed his sympathy for the painful struggles of conscience she had undergone,—a sympathy he had unsuspectingly accorded.

"Perhaps, after all," he continued, "I am unduly hard upon her. Had she been reared in a less narrow system, she might have found legitimate scope for her talents as a professional actress. Whereas, under a regime of repression, the propensity to falsehood has eaten into and vitiated her whole character."

After we reached the Triangle, Zöe continued to be so painfully affected that her father bade her retire at once, and sent for medical aid. He, too, was much depressed, and requested me to stay with him. We sat up together, but spoke little; a word now and then, at considerable intervals. He, like his daughter, preferred silent sympathy to that of the loquacious sort. His utterances, when he did speak, showed that his suffering was for humanity, not for himself.

"Two hearts, and two only, have I specially striven to attach to myself, and redeem by love. In what I have failed I know not. Well, well; better to think the fault is in myself, than condemn humanity utterly."

I ventured to suggest that, although we might find it very

hard to admit that the Supreme may have an ideal for us which is not our ideal for ourselves; yet, with so many types in the physical world, it might be that we erred in demanding that there be but one in the moral.

"Surely," he replied, musingly, "love is a fire that ought to be able to fuse and assimilate all."

I had no opinions myself. As Artist, my love had been for freedom and beauty. And on such an occasion, and in such a presence, I should not have propounded opinions if I had been possessed of any. The sentiments expressed by him belonged to the category of feeling, and to one who feels, opinions and arguments are impertinences. Placed as I was, an expression only of sympathy was fitting, and sympathy might well be exhibited in following the train of thought indicated by him. So, not in answer to his last remark, but in pursuance of it I said,—

"Yet, if all things proceed from love, it would seem that love must really be the source even of the differences which lead to our disappointments. If the initial and final stages of being belong to love, harmony, or identity, it may be necessary that the intermediate condition involve opposites and antagonisms. It is as impossible to conceive of conscious existence without differences and degrees, as of a whole without parts, or life without motion. And if opposites of physical nature, why not of moral? In objecting to the essential conditions of life, people really object to life itself. They would have the fruit without the flower, or the flower without the plant, or the plant without the soil, or the soil without the elements, or the elements without the activity which makes them contend, and mingle, and fructify; in short, they would have results without processes."

"Forgive me," he said, "if I have suffered my mind to dwell on one of your earlier remarks, instead of following you throughout. You have unawares trodden upon the heels of a mystery communicated to me many years ago, in one of my flights into the Empyrean:—that with spiritual natures, sex is the product of love, not the reverse as in the merely animal

world. Without entering on the vexed question, whether in our own case the individual mind precedes and forms the individual body, it is clear that what I have said must be the case, if the absolute mind precedes the material universe. For, if all things have their origin in universal love, the sentiment of love must have existed prior to the manifestation which we call sex."

"So that what we call good and evil," I suggested, "may be as male and female to each other, between them constituting and producing life."

He smiled at this, and enquired to which category I assigned which function; but I confessed myself unable to offer a rule on this point, and said that probably it is sometimes one and sometimes the other. Only, that on the theory of the attraction of opposites, in order to make a perfect marriage between mortals, the better the one side is, the worse the other should be. And at this he smiled again—but not, it seemed to me, as implying that he considered what I had said to be altogether absurd—and remarked that marriage assumed many forms. There were marriages of intensification, as in the spiritual world; marriages of completion, as in the ideal world; and marriages of correction, or discipline, as in the actual world. And here he sighed.

Some days passed before Zöe consented to see me again. Her father took her consent as a sign of amendment. The excitement which had characterized our first meeting, and under whose influence she had so readily made me her confidant, had quite passed away. In her present phase of re-action, she took an exaggerated view of what she persisted in regarding as her unfeminine forwardness, and expressed herself as ashamed to see me. I sent back a jocular message, saying that if it would put her more at ease to know that I was out of the world, I should be happy to do her the service of quitting it; but that I thought it a better plan that she should convince me, by ocular proof, of the extreme propriety of her demeanor when she was quite herself. I could not, however, help deriving a certain

gratification from her self-banishment. For the self-consciousness indicated by her conduct seemed to me inconsistent with a merely fraternal sentiment.

As the daughter mended, the father lost ground. Avenil urged a more active life. His body suffered through his mind. Let him occupy his mind with other things, and all would soon be well. I was now a member of the Triangle, and saw much of him. I sought to bring him down to the Conversation Hall in the evenings, but he shrank from the general view. To me there was an immense delight in the society of the Hall. The cultivated intelligence, broad views, and kindly spirit which marked it, perpetually suggested to me a contrast with the sectarianism in which I had been reared. It was as if I had escaped from the stifling confinement and gloom of a vault, into the free air and light of heaven. It seemed so strange to me to find Truth regarded as the sole criterion of any statement, and not its agreement with the tenets of a sect.

The only society which Christmas Carol would receive was that of a few of his most intimate friends, and this in his own rooms. Suddenly he announced his intention of taking Zöe abroad for a change. When I heard this I secretly hoped to be allowed to form one of the party. Either divining or sharing my wish, he said that he hoped on some future tour to have me with him; but this time he thought he was best consulting the object of his journey by taking his daughter alone.

I thanked him for his thought of me at such a moment, and said that, while I felt toward him and his all the affection and confidence which result ordinarily only from a life-long association, I sometimes marvelled at the existence of such a sentiment on his part.

He smiled, and said,—

"I have known you longer and better than you are aware of. Since our first meeting, in the Alberthalla, I have never lost sight of you. I know your faithfulness, and your labor, and your patience, and how, out of pure tenderness of heart, you strove painfully to reconcile two hardly compatible duties,—

your duty to your parent, with that which you owed to your own soul. I have seen you tried, and found you true, and that before ever you were aware that any eye beheld you, save that of the Everlasting Conscience."

"You would scarcely award me the credit of having labored and not fainted, if you knew all," I managed to say, my eyes swimming and voice faltering, not less at his words than at the recollections evoked by them.

"I know," he said, "and regret the extremity to which at one time you were brought. It was owing to my own unparalleled engrossment just then, that I suffered you nearly to slip out of my reach."

Here he rose, and going to a cabinet, took out a sheet of paper, which he brought and placed in my hands, saying,—

"The loss of this saved you. Do you not remember that it was the turning point of your fortune?"

Glancing at it, I found it was the rough draft of the advertisement my desperation had prompted me to draw up, and which, I now perceived, I must have dropped in the publishing office.

"You don't look at the other side," he remarked.

Turning it, I found there some sentences which I had totally forgotten having written. Sentences which showed that, whether speculatively or practically, I had so far familiarized myself with the idea of suicide, as to sum up the arguments for and against it. The conclusion then come to was, that in yielding to the temptation, I should be giving my mother the very unhappiness I was then sacrificing myself to spare her.

"To have carried out the project there contemplated," he said, "would indeed have been a terrible waste of your time and powers. But I am going to make a clean breast and tell you all, even though you may resent my action as somewhat impertinent. I chanced to be in the inner room when you were conversing with the agent, and could not avoid hearing your indignant rejection of his suggestion of a mercenary marriage. Partly to spare your own feeling, I would not let you know that you had been overheard. I had always felt as a

child to your father, and in turn felt as a father to his child. This must be my excuse. Zöe's attraction to you through your work was altogether spontaneous. I need not describe my satisfaction at finding who it was that had excited her interest. Your position at home made open interference impracticable. I was a black sheep to the pietists of the Remnant; and to have revealed myself then as your friend, would have been to defeat what at that time was the object of your life. In all that the agent did, he acted for me. It is true that I then considered you wrong in not endeavoring to win over your mother at least to a comprehension of your principles and motives; for I thought affection, truthfulness, and sincerity such as yours must sooner or later find an echo in every human heart; most of all in that of your own parent. My own experiences, however, have now convinced me of the contrary, and shown me that you reconciled, in the only way possible to you, the conflicting claims of affection and of faithfulness to your own convictions. You and I alike may find comfort in regarding such absolute incapacity for sympathy as a species of insanity. There is an insanity which comes by training, as well as that which comes by nature;—though too often the one but supplements the other, as in that which takes the form of a narrow sectarianism. You see I speak unreservedly to you, even as to my own son. Would that you could have indeed occupied that place!"

"Is it too late?" I cried, startled out of my cherished secret by this utterance, and the emotion which accompanied it.

"Too late? Yes, you are fit for something better than to be sacrificed to one who is about——"

He was unable to finish. His voice faltered, and tears ran down his cheek.

"Great Heavens!" I exclaimed, divining his meaning. "I never thought of that. Poor, poor, darling, how terribly she must suffer in the thought."

"You think that but for that," he said, "you might have reciprocated her attraction to you?"

"But for that!" I cried. "Aye, and in spite of that! I

meant all that I said when I expressed my tolerance for the error that comes through excess of heart. Do not breathe a word of it to Zöe; but suffer me, when this trouble is overpast, to strive to win her affection, and convert the brother she deems me, into the lover she deserves."

He looked his gratitude, and I added,—

"Would that I could believe it would comfort her to know that I, at least, am utterly devoted to her."

"Nothing can comfort her at present," he said, "save the assurance that she is not despised by others as she despises herself."

CHAPTER VI.

The great work approached its completion. Already were hundreds of square miles of the Sahara covered with fresh water which had found its way from beneath through the excavations. The admission of the ocean would cover thousands of square miles, even right up to the point where the river which issued from Lake Tchad was bringing down its rich sediment to fertilize the shore of the new sea. Careful surveys had been made to ascertain the precise limits to which the inundation would rise, and all populations within those limits had been removed to a safe elevation. So broad and deep was the channel by which the water was to enter, that the spectacle of its first admission was looked forward to with much interest and curiosity. Already a town had sprung up at the entrance, and a spacious harbor had been constructed by means of extensive breakwaters. The Emperor of Soudan, mindful of his challenge to a race between his own engineering operations and those of his cousin, had confessed himself the loser, ascribing his defeat to the unexpected hardness of the rock to be pierced. He hoped, however, that even if his tunnel could not be extended to the Red Sea, it might still be utilized for purposes of irrigation.

The rock and soil left to serve as a barrier to the sea until the final moment of admission, were so cut and bored as to be readily carried away by the rush and deposited in the deeper hollows of the desert. The agency whereby the last obstacle was to be removed from the channel's mouth, consisted of a vast system of mines, which were to be exploded simultaneously.

The labor of supervising the final preparations had been most beneficial to Carol's health. He appeared to his friends to be once more himself. Zöe, too, had regained much of her old brightness and elasticity, though not until after she had passed through a most severe ordeal.

We went, together with a large party from the Triangle, to the opening ceremony. The assemblage of vessels and notables from all parts of the world, made the occasion one of unparalleled magnificence. Of course, Christmas Carol, as the projector and executor of the scheme, would under any circumstances have been the most conspicuous personage present. But his more than imperial munificence in undertaking and carrying through such vast operations at his own sole cost, and without prospect of ulterior gain to himself, and the world-wide reputation he had acquired for the singular benevolence, simplicity, and nobility of his character — in some of the ruder countries obtaining for him the credit of a supernatural origin —these, not to reckon his personal beauty of face and form, caused him to be the one person whom to have seen, was to have seen all, and to have missed, was to have missed all.

At a given signal, in sight of the multitudes assembled on land, sea, and in air, the mines were fired. A number of muffled explosions in rapid succession was then heard, and the whole mass heaved and sank and rose again, like the surface of a boiling fluid. Then from myriads of pores the smoke oozed slowly out, showing that every particle of the soil was loosened from its neighbor. This absence of coherence in the mass was presently demonstrated by a slight movement of the surface, in the direction of the channel. This was proof that the experiment had succeeded; for the movement was caused by the

pressure of the sea against the mouth of the channel. A few moments more, and the intervening obstacles had been swept away, as the sea rushed, a broad and mighty stream, through the opening, and along its appointed course, towards the heart of the Sahara, that vast region, from which it had for myriads and myriads of ages been utterly divorced, but with which now it was to be rejoined in a happy union for evermore!

The success of the enterprise thus far being ensured, the Emperor of Soudan, as the next principal personage concerned, turned to Carol and tenderly embraced him, placing at the same time a magnificent jewelled chain about his neck, while salvos of artillery rent the air.

The likeness between the royal cousins was undeniable; but, I was assured, not so striking as it had been. The Emperor was much the stouter of the two, and his countenance bore an expression indicative of a life of self-indulgence, and little calculated to win trust. At least, such was the impression it made upon me.

Then followed an outburst of music from bands stationed not only on the earth and the sea, but also in the air, their combined harmonies mingling with the rush of the waters as they hastened towards the longing desert in such volume as to suggest the idea that the level of the ocean itself must soon be sensibly lowered; a rush that would continue for months, until the thirsty sands of the new ocean-bed were satisfied, and could drink no more, and every remote nook and corner of the desert filled up to the level of the Mediterranean itself.

The music of the bands then ceased, and a myriad voices, chiefly of the laborers who had been employed on the works, commenced pouring forth to a wild melodious chant, the anthem,—

"Return, oh Sea! unto thine ancient bed,
Where waits thy Desert Bride,
With dust bespread,
And parching sand—
Her fount of tears all dried—
Waits for thy moistening hand
To cool her fevered head.
Return! return! oh Sea!"

The words were written by me without any idea of their finding publicity. But Carol took a fancy to them, and having turned them into Arabic, and had them set to music, he made their performance a feature in the proceedings of that great day. The final verse—that lauding the hero of the event—I ought to state, was added surreptitiously, and took him entirely by surprise. The whole was sung with vast enthusiasm; the blending of the musical rhythm as it rose and fell, with the constant rush and roar of the flood, producing an effect altogether extraordinary.

Even with night the music did not cease. The whole of the parties who were afloat in the air, had made an excursion down the course of the stream to witness its issue from the channel, and diffusion over the low-lying reaches of the desert. Music had accompanied us all the way, and long after we had returned to our resting-place and lain down to sleep, it might be heard in the air, now far and now near, now high and now low, now singly and now massed, as the aërial bands flitted to and fro, ever maintaining their sweet utterances, careering and wheeling over the landscape like a flight of tuneful curlews.

It had been a question how best to dispose of the vast quantity of rock and soil which had been excavated; and it was decided to heap it in a mass near the interior end of the channel, so as to form a foundation for a maritime city. This city, it was urged by the assembled magnates, ought to be called after its founder. They accordingly fixed upon the name it now bears, which will serve to perpetuate the beloved memory to all future time.

There was nothing to detain us longer on the spot. The hot season was advancing, and Zöe was still far from strong. Carol invited me to accompany him and his daughter to Switzerland, where the best effects might be expected from the mountain airs, and where, as he said, I should find fresh scenes on which to exercise my art.

CHAPTER VII.

High up on the slopes of the Alps, in green vales embosomed amid peaks, passes, and glaciers, inhaling new life with every breath, and new vigor with every step of our daily rambles, we passed the happiest days it had been my lot to know. Carol was much occupied in examining and tabulating the accounts daily received from various points in the Sahara of the rise and advance of the waters. And I worked hard at my painting, giving meanwhile lessons to Zöe, who had insisted on learning from me.

Thus constantly and intimately associated with her, and witnessing the abounding richness and fulness of her nature, I learnt to comprehend and appreciate the impulse which prompts the true woman to rank her love as supreme above all prudences and conventions whatsoever. Her soul was a sea which but needed some fitting shore on which to break and lavish all the blessings of its ineffable tenderness. So harmoniously was she constructed, that it was impossible to tell whether it was in heart or brain that her ideas and impulses had their origin. Thinking and feeling were with her an identical process. In short, in every respect of heart, mind, form and demeanor, she was all that I could wish a woman to be, save that she seemed to be utterly unconscious that I was not really her brother.

Much in her as I could trace of her father, there was also much for which he could not be considered responsible. Her coloring of character as well as complexion showed this. She was something more than merely the feminine of himself, a difference not attributable to difference of sex. It was on my telling him the result of my analysis that he gave me the history of her mother. I then clearly saw that Zöe was the due resultant of the compounded natures of her parents.

On my owning to him the disappointment I felt at her apparent inaccessibility to anything like the tender feeling I entertained for her, he bade me have patience, and not betray my

passion by the slightest word or sign. "Nature," he said, "is the best teacher and guide. The healing of a wound cannot be hurried, for it is a growth that is required. A premature disclosure might put all back. Nothing can be done at present beyond making the conditions favorable to the growth we desire."

"Making the conditions favorable to the growth we desire." The more I pondered over this utterance, the more fully was the depth of the philosophy contained in it revealed to me. I saw too, that it comprised the ruling principle of his life. Nothing about him was too insignificant to illustrate it. He applied it alike to the regeneration of a planet, the development of a soul, and the cultivation of a flower. To bring out the latent indwelling Deity that he recognized as substanding all existence, was for him the sole end of the life worth living.

The phrase,—"background of Deity," was used by him one day, as resting by the edge of a glacier, he called the attention of Zöe and myself to an exquisite little flower, which was flourishing there in spite, apparently, of the most unfavorable conditions of chilling ice and naked rock.

"See," he said, "how this plant seems to contradict all our theories respecting the necessity to growth, of the conditions favorable to it. Can you account for its flourishing in such a spot, Zöe?"

"Why should it not," she replied, somewhat bitterly, I fancied, "when evil flourishes under conditions which appear to us to be favorable only to good?"

"Succeeding so well, under such conditions," I suggested, "to what might it not have attained under more favorable ones?"

"Thus do the life and character of each of us ever tinge our philosophy!" said Carol, with a smile of sadness. "But yours, Lawrence, is not in perfect accord with itself. The point is one which no man can determine. Who knows how far the discipline of uncongenial conditions serves to produce that which is best in us? If I mistake not, you once admitted as much to me."

I said that certainly I had found, even in my work as an artist, a liability to be carried in a direction contrary to the influences prevailing at the moment. For instance, it was always in summer that I succeeded in most vividly representing the phenomena of winter, and in winter those of summer. It seemed as if there were a reaction against one's actual conditions.

"The ideal," he said, "is more to you than the actual, and requires the force of contrasts to elucidate it. It is often so in life and character, as well as in art. Yet, nevertheless, and in spite of all anomalies, it is our duty to make the conditions as favorable as possible to the best, even though we know they sometimes will fail to produce the best. For what is the beauty of this very flower but the result of conditions favorable to such beauty, enjoyed by its progenitors near or remote? And what the evil which Zöe deprecates, but a survival from times, perchance long past, of the effect of conditions unfavorable to good?"

"We should hardly have noticed this flower had we found it in a conservatory," observed Zöe. "Instead of reigning a queen of beauty there, it would be but a humble courtier."

Something suggested to me the ancient class-feuds, by which, prior to the Emancipation, our social system was disfigured. And I made a remark to the effect that if the elements were possessed of sentiments corresponding to those of humanity, we might find the soil, the moisture, the atmosphere, and the light, grudging the flower the very sweetness and beauty which it derived from them; much as the laboring classes used to indulge in enmity against the wealth, culture, and refinement which were the noblest result of their own toil.

"Add," said Carol, "chiefly owing to the selfishness which once governed the distribution of those results. Those who had the power took all, and gave back nothing beyond what they were obliged. A veritable Jacob's ladder has been man's ascent, first physical, then mental, from the first step planted in earth, to the apex piercing the clouds. In each of his stages, —the struggle for individual existence, the organization for

conquest and supremacy, and the final one of combination for mutual advantage, such as the conditions so always have been the results. It is when the parts show themselves so engrossed by their own personal interests, as they deem them, as to be incapable of sympathizing with and aiding the higher destinies of the whole, that a state of things is produced which contains the elements of its own destruction. That is my definition of evil."

I had long wished to know precisely what form the Universe had assumed in his mind, and I took this opportunity to make a remark which led him to give expression to it.

"Whatever the state or stage of existence," he said, "there must still be a mystery recognizable by the faculties of those who are in that stage. The ability to apprehend such mystery involves the passage to a higher class. And until we have such ability, we are always liable to be in some error respecting the things which lie immediately below it. My view of the higher phenomena of the Universe may be utterly in error, although I have taken into account all the facts which I have been able to find in those phenomena, and tried to generalize from them with an unprejudiced mind. However, for the present, this is where I stand. Deity, which is the All, has put forth out of himself, as it were, the whole substance of which the Universe is composed, withdrawing himself into the background, and leaving each various portion to the control of certain unvarying rules. These rules constitute the Laws of Nature. Proceeding through an infinity of stages, these portions gradually attain a consistency and consolidation which render them incapable of relapse into a lower stage.

"That is, they become, as individuals, indestructible and immortal. But to be this, they must harmonize in their character and emotions with the great Whole from which they originally sprang. Failing to do this, by reason of discordant self-engrossment, they prove themselves unfitted to endure, and so decompose and become resolved into their original elements, their constituents remingling with the surrounding universe. It is thus that whatever is sufficiently beautiful and good con-

tinues, by force of its own attraction, to endure and grow; while that which is obnoxious becomes dispersed, and vanishes by force of its own inherent antagonism to the general conditions of existence. I like thus to think of the good as enduring for ever, and of the evil as being dissolved and recast in fresh moulds, to come out good and enduring in its turn. I say, I like to think this. I cannot prove that it is so. Though at present I see nothing that is inconsistent with its being so."

I ventured to remark that, at any rate, he had determined for himself the question between Theism and Atheism in favor of the former.

"Call it rather," he said, "the question whether the material with which infinity was originally filled, and of which, therefore, the universe is composed, possessed among its other endowments faculties corresponding to those of sensation, consciousness, and thought, *as a whole?* Yes, I do so decide it, at least for myself; and for this reason. If the organized and individual portions alone were capable of thought, they would be superior to the rest, and able to penetrate its mystery; and so, a part would be superior to the whole. But the existence of mystery incomprehensible by the parts, demonstrates for me the superiority of the Whole in all qualities possessed by those parts. It baffles the utmost scrutiny of the most advanced intelligence of any of its parts. What but a superior intelligence can do that? But, beyond these or other reasons, I have *feelings,*—feelings which compel me to the same result. It is a necessity of my nature to personify the whole, and to regard the laws of nature as but the thoughts of God. But I am not therefore unable to comprehend the stand-point of those who deem it most probable that, as in the individualized part, so in the Universal Whole, the mechanical and automatic should precede the mental and conscious. Let each be faithful to his own lights. Only the presumption which leads men to dogmatize is utterly condemned. Imagine anyone who possessed but a fractional knowledge of our natures and circumstances, claiming dogmatically to define one of ourselves! Methinks we should resent it as a great liberty."

"Ah! father," cried Zöe, "this flower, pretty as it is, will not be among your indestructibles. See! it is drooping already. And, look! here is a worm at the core eating away its heart."

As she said this, I observed his whole frame shiver as with a sudden tremor.

Walking homewards he resumed the subject of conditions, saying,—

"When I think of the force that has been constantly exerted through myriads of generations, to compel men to hate liberty, to hate each other, and to fear the light, and how tremendous is the strength of hereditary impressions thus accumulated, I am lost in wonder at the marvellous vitality of the divine spark within us. That it should have survived those ages of falsehood and suppression, is to me the standing miracle of the world. You remember, Lawrence, our first meeting, and the effect your first lesson in English history had upon you? Well, will you believe it? there was a time when one of England's greatest and most trusted Ministers sought to conciliate a priesthood by excluding that very study from an university course. The people of England were then but half awake. But this roused them thoroughly. 'Perish,' they said, 'a legion of ministers, whatever our debt to them, sooner than thus curtail Knowledge and subordinate Truth in deference to that old serpent of Sacerdotalism, which has so long deceived the Earth.' Ah! they were grand times, those that led up to the Emancipation. Of all the past periods of our country's history, it is then that I should have chosen to live. And the owls and bats who lived in them used to declaim against 'the decay of Faith!'"

So the summer came and passed.

CHAPTER VIII.

We were still in Switzerland, when the ear of Carol, ever on the alert to succor or to save, was caught by a cry of distress which came from Egypt. Famine was not yet actually in the land. It was the prospect for the next year that was so gloomy. July, August, had come and gone, and the Nile, which ought to be at its utmost height in September, had scarcely risen above its lowest point; and the lowest point that year had been below any ever before known. The failure was, thus, to an extent absolutely unprecedented. It meant starvation to millions. Already were the superstitious populace crying out that it was sent in vengeance for the attempt to redeem the Sahara from its ancient curse. That the judgment was specially intended for Egypt, for consenting to the scheme of her hereditary rival and foe, the royal house of Abyssinia, was manifest from the fact that there had been no lack of rain to swell the Upper Nile and its tributaries. It was by a supernatural intervention that the due flow of the river had been arrested.

September past, all hope vanished. The river ought to have been now fast subsiding from its inundation. From the parched plains of Egypt and Nubia, teeming with their millions, rose such a cry as can come only from a nation which sees itself on the point of perishing. The heart of the world was stirred; but ere its hands could act, a mighty aërial fleet dispatched by Carol, and laden with food, dropped down, as heaven-sent, into the midst of the now starving masses. But the report, again reiterated, that there had been no lack of rain at the sources, induced him to take another step. He dispatched a confidential scientific expedition by fast aëromotive to ascertain the truth of the statement, and the point at which, if true, the river ceased to fill its bed. The greatness of the distance intervening between the Nile and his excavations made it utterly impossible, he thought, that there should be any con-

nection between the two regions to account for the river's failure. Perhaps some accident had occurred with the imperial operations to the south. The engineers had some time since reported that they had tapped several springs, the water from which was so abundant as to impede their operations. The tone of the Soudan, and especially of the Abyssinian press at this time, was so menacing and even exultant in respect to their ancient enemy, as to lead Carol to make strong remonstrances to the Emperor, and to represent that such uncivilized conduct seriously imperilled the country's prospects of admission to the Confederacy of Nations.

The report brought back to Carol excited his utmost alarm. His agent had first come upon the river at Khartoom, where the clear and thick Niles join to form the great river of Egypt. He thought, by attacking his task at this point, to ascertain which branch was in fault. To his surprise he found that both branches had been filled to their usual height, so that the escape must be at some point lower down. On seeking to obtain information, he found himself utterly baffled by the ignorance, real or pretended, of the people.

Leaving Khartoom, he next dropped down upon the river at the point where it is joined by one of its most important branches, the Atbara,—about one hundred and fifty miles below Khartoom. Here he found the natives in a state of wonder and alarm at the extraordinary aspect of things. The branch had performed its duty as usual, but scarcely any water had come down the bed of the main stream. The people, little advanced in civilization or intelligence beyond their remote forefathers, were at first very shy of their interrogator; but, representing himself as allied to the food-commission for relieving the distress caused by the drought, he gained their confidence sufficiently to learn that they had attempted to ascend the river in order to ascertain the cause of its drying up, but were stopped just above Shendy by a party of troops who said that the government had issued orders prohibiting all persons from approaching the river beyond that point.

Now, between Shendy and Halfay, for a space of about four-

teen miles, the Nile runs in a deep narrow stream through a defile formed by rocky hills. A gloomy place is this, and one which the people of the country care little to visit. The precaution observed in respect to it, therefore, seemed all the more strange to our party of explorers. They knew that the Emperor was driving a tunnel from the Sahara to the Red Sea, but its precise course had not been made known, and the river's bed was here at least a thousand feet above the sea-level.

Having fixed the point of disappearance within a space of forty or fifty miles, and finding the passage barred, the explorers determined to proceed cautiously. By dint of liberal payment, they obtained the guidance of a native who knew the country well. Then waiting till nightfall before starting, they rose to a height sufficient to escape being seen, and proceeded slowly up the river, making careful observations with their glasses as they went along. They knew that about the center of the defile was one of the cataracts of the Nile—the sixth—and for the sound of this they watched. As they failed to hear it, they gradually descended towards the earth, to make sure of not missing it. The country seemed utterly deserted, and no lights or other signs of human presence were to be seen. They therefore became bolder, and approached quite close to the river. They thus found the place of the cataract; but the amount of water that flowed over it was so scanty as fully to account for the absence of the expected noise.

Ascending a little further, a glare of distant lights became visible. Seeing this, they rose higher in the air, and continuing their course, presently heard the noise as of a camp, and a prolonged roar as of a mighty rush of waters, but with a more muffled sound than would be made by a cataract.

Pausing directly over the spot, they were able, by means of the lights with which the camp was freely illuminated, to perceive what was taking place below. The guide soon detected a change in the aspect of the spot. His description, added to the testimony of their own eyes and ears, explained all. But at first he was too terrified to speak. Those below were demons, he declared, and not mortals; for they had dug a hole in the

world, and were pouring the river into it! A further inspection made it appear that a gigantic dam had been constructed slantways across the gorge, and a cutting made in the base of the mountain on the western bank, at the lower end of the dam, and that through this cutting the river was flowing into a deep hollow, for only thus could they account for the roar of its passage.

To make quite sure, they descended upon the river at a short distance above the camp. Here they found the stream flowing full and free as at ordinary times. Then, returning to the place where it disappeared, they crossed the mountain, in order to ascertain whether it issued on the other side. They even went to some distance, but found no traces of it. A final visit of inspection was then made to the place of disappearance, and then it was determined to turn the aëromotive westwards; for Carol had instructed the leader, in case he found himself at a loss, to proceed to the camp at the mouth of the Imperial tunnel, and turn his wits to the best account. He gave him for this purpose the exact position, in latitude and longitude, of the spot in question. First, however, they returned to Shendy, and set down their guide, charging him, for the present, if possible, to hold his tongue.

In consequence of the mists which covered the earth, and extended far above it, they were compelled to rise to a great height in order to ascertain their position by stellar observations. Having at length arrived over the spot which they were seeking, they returned towards the earth. Here, while still far up, the sounds of music and revelry plainly greeted their approach; for sounds ascend from the earth far more readily than they descend to it. The camp was a blaze of light. Coming near, they saw the Imperial banner floating above a vast pavilion. The sound of rushing waters, too, rose to their ears. Every one below was evidently too busily engaged in carousing to observe them. They would descend close to the earth and make sure, before reporting to their employer.

There was no longer room for doubt. At a distance below the camp, short, yet far enough to be safe, and a little to the

side of it, where the ground sloped rapidly, was the mouth of an enormous tunnel, and from it issued a volume of water, so vast that it could only be supplied by the sea or a great river. To ascertain which of the two, it was necessary only to taste it. This was soon done. Letting down a vessel, they drew it up filled. The water was muddy, but perfectly fresh. But, listen, what is the meaning of the chorus yonder carousers are singing so lustily? The words are Arabic, and the music is rude. This is the burden of their song:—

"Rescued from the hands of robbers, welcome back, O Nile, to thine own kindred. No longer shall Egypt be fat with the fat of Abyssinia, but fed by thee the desert shall rejoice; yea, the Sahara itself shall be turned into a garden! Amen. Amen!"

CHAPTER IX.

On learning these things, Carol dispatched a telegraphic message to the Emperor of Soudan. It ran thus:—

"My Cousin,—

"Relieve, I pray thee, my mind, which is sore disturbed by an evil dream concerning thee. I have dreamt that thou art the cause of the dire calamity which has befallen thy neighbors the Egyptians, in that thou hast turned the Nile from its bed into the desert, and deprived them of the means whereon they have ever depended for their subsistence. Say to me, if thou canst do so truly, that this is but a dream, and that thou art not seeking to repay thine ancient grudge against Egypt by returning evil for evil."

This was the answer that he received:—

"My Cousin,—

"Peace and good-will from me to thee. Truly thou art the best of dreamers in all respects save one, namely, that thy dreams are not dreams, but realities. What thou sayest is true. The Nile, our Nile, has at length, and at my instigation, abandoned the strangers whom for tens of thousands of years it has nourished with sustenance drawn from us, and has returned to its proper allegiance. A wrong is not less a wrong because it is ancient. What I have done, I have done within my own territory, and in furtherance of the welfare of my own people. Every rectification of an established wrong produces suffering for a time. Yet even towards mine enemies have I acted tenderly, inasmuch as I have left them the rich and ample streams of the Atbara, wherewith by judicious contrivance they can sufficiently water their lands. But, even should this old and evil Egypt utterly fail and vanish, there will not be wanting a new and a better Egypt to take its place. Already is the Nile depositing its rich soil upon the sands of the Sahara, and flowing, a noble river, to meet the sea wherewith thy god-like hand has redeemed and gladdened the desert. Come when thou canst to

Thy loving Cousin."

"This takes away my last hope," he said. "In spite of the fact that the river at that point is at least a thousand feet above the level required for his projected tunnel to the sea, I had been trying to persuade myself that he had yielded only to the temptation of an after-thought. But this shows that he has deceived me from the first." And he handed me the message.

"The plea is a specious one," I said, when I had read it; "but I suspect the Federal Council will have little difficulty in meeting it, whether by argument or by force. You must keep that to publish, in case anyone suspects you of being a party to the scheme."

"Suspect me!" he cried. "No, no! I may at least trust that I am above suspicion. But your first thought has indicated

one course that I must take." And he penned a dispatch in reply to the Emperor's:—

"COUSIN,—the argument which thou hast used is as unworthy of thy head as the deed which thou hast done is of thy heart. Unless the wrong committed against Egypt be repaired, and that speedily, the Federal Council will repair it for thee, and at thy cost. Even I, who am now, partly for my work in the Sahara and on thy behalf, a member of that great tribunal, will give my voice against thee. As it is, thou hast by this act indefinitely deferred the admission of thy country to the Confederation of the Nations. The barbarity of thy deed is incompatible with the civilization required of its members. What arrangement may be affected in the future to secure an equitable division of the Nile, after thou shalt, by careful husbanding and augmenting of its sources, have increased the volume of its waters beyond that which is required by Egypt, cannot now be said. The duty required of me is more urgent. I devote myself utterly to the rescue of the millions who, through thee, are perishing for lack of food. The fortune which I derived from thy crown jewels shall minister to the preservation of that crown from execration and ignominy."

When I had read this, he said to me,—

"What I have done hitherto has been done out of income. This emergency can be met only by a sacrifice of principal. We will return home at once, and place Zöe with our friends, and then go to superintend in person the distribution of supplies in Egypt. I think I read you aright when I take this to be your desire."

Following his wont when a wrong was done, he still sought to find pleas in mitigation of his cousin's act. Anything seemed better than to be compelled to regard it as a treachery conceived in the beginning. But a consultation with his engineers showed his hopes to be untenable. An underground exploration demonstrated the tunnel to have been raised above the level necessary for its declared purpose long before it approached the

river. The change of the stratum to be pierced, from hard limestone to soft sandstone, had greatly facilitated the operations, and the downward course of the water through many miles of the tunnel was so rapid as to greatly enlarge the channel for itself.

The memory of these events is too fresh to need any recalling by me. How rapidly the world's horror at the act of the monarch of the dark continent, and its consequences, was succeeded by the world's wonder at the self-immolation of him who determined to thwart that act and avert those consequences, is too well known to require description here. Christmas Carol determined to save Egypt by himself; not that he could or would dissuade others from aiding, but by his promptitude and the immensity of his efforts he anticipated and distanced all competition. Summoned by him, from all quarters of the heavens sped "argosies of magic sails," laden with the essentials of life, and dropping down with their precious cargoes in the midst of the hungry and grateful populations.

For a whole year must these millions be supported by such charity, even were the Nile restored in time to afford supplies for the year following. In spite of the danger he was incurring, the Emperor remained obdurate. Although knowing that a solemn appeal had been made to the Federal Council, he refused to restore the river, and sent an army to guard the dam and the entrance to his tunnel against the Egyptians. But, an army on the ground to withstand an army in the air! The idea would be madness. Carol, however, clung to the hope that it was madness, and not badness that had perverted the mind of his cousin; for it was upon this theory that he accounted for all the villains of history. Avenil's theory is the same, only he uses it to account for the saints of history. Urging this plea in arrest of the Council's vengeance, and eager to save life to the utmost, he requested that an aërial force, comprising a strong working party, might be placed at his disposal, to be employed on a service known only to the Council.

His request was granted; and leaving me in charge of the

food-distribution, the organization of which was now perfected, he suddenly descended with the Federal squadron upon the camp at the dam. The event was as he expected. Not a man of the Imperial forces would risk an encounter. The first shell, dropped so as to explode over their heads, dispersed the entire garrison, and the miners of the expedition were left unmolested to work their will upon the dam and tunnel.

So vast and solid were the works, that it was evident their construction must have employed thousands of men for years. On one side, the mountain had been pierced to make way for the river, and on the other it had been cast into the bed and walled up with mighty rocks, to turn the river into its new channel. In addition to this, a tunnel of enormous dimensions had been hewn through the solid rock for scores of miles towards the desert.

The first thing was to mine the dam, with a view to blowing it up. This was no small task, but the expedition was equal to it, and having made preparations for a series of explosions, at a given signal the mass was so loosened that it yielded to the pressure of the water, and went rushing with it down the now open channel of the river.

So low cut, however, was the tunnel, that a considerable portion of the stream still escaped into it. The stoppage of this was a task of greater difficulty; and it was necessary to accomplish it solidly, so that on its next rise the river should be safe from a return to the tunnel. On the successful conclusion of the work, Carol rejoined me in Egypt, exceedingly broken in health by his wear of mind and body. Far more than from his tremendous physical exertions, did he suffer from the thought of his cousin's perfidy. His sensitive soul seemed to be struck to its quick, as by the fang of a venomous serpent. His illness assumed so serious a character as to make his immediate return home imperative.

In order to guard against a reconstruction of the dam, one of the vessels of the squadron was detached, with orders to cruise at intervals over the locality.

CHAPTER X.

Even when restored to the quiet of his own home, and tended assiduously by Zöe, Bertie, and myself, Carol failed to regain his lost health. Zöe manifested all the joy to see me that I could wish, but its quality was not of the kind I desired. Her demeanor continued to have the perfect frankness befitting a sister, but obstinately refused to take any other form. She gladly admitted me to share in all the offices of ministering to her father, precisely as if I had been a born brother to her.

I, meanwhile, made my home with Bertie, becoming as much attached to him as does everyone else who has the opportunity. He had outgrown the liability to the sudden illnesses which so alarmed his friends a few years back, so that old age found him a hale and hearty man. Together we daily walked to and fro between the two houses, and from him I learnt many particulars of Carol's life which before were unknown to me. He was very grave about his "dear boy," as he always called him, and said that it was far more from a moral than from a physical shock that he was suffering.

Carol's own hopelessness of his recovery was a bad symptom. He maintained that his work was done, and had ended in disappointment. Hearts were harder than rocks. The latter by a little industry and skill were redeemable. The former resisted alike all influences of love and of friendship. How he had failed to win the souls of his wives, was already known to me. Now he would tell me all the story of the Emperor, and I should see what cause he had for despair. Twice had he saved his capital from the destruction it would inevitably have met at the hands of the Federal Council, besides heaping benefits innumerable upon him and his people; but now no word came of repentance or sorrow. What was the meaning of the advantages with which he had been endowed, if their exercise thus resulted in ignominious failure?

I adjured him to take a more sanguine view of things. He

judged by too high a standard, even the impossible standard of his own ideal; although the result had not been what his imagination had framed, yet for all others it had been truly immense. In any case, a beautiful example, such as he had set the world, could never be lost.

Referring to Zöe, he said that but for her he should be glad to be at rest. She needed some one to lean upon. What did I think of her? Had the interval been sufficient to enable her to become herself again?

I told him that I believed her to be perfectly recovered, only that she had taken a firm resolve to lead a solitary life. Her very frankness with me showed that she regarded all men as brothers.

"And you?" he said, regarding me with a wistful smile. "Are you still of the same mind?"

I assured him that, with me, to know Zöe was to love her, but that I had repressed every indication of the feeling, through fear of its making a barrier between us if known to her. "I sometimes," I added, "am disposed to think she still regrets her severance from that man, even though she would on no account be again associated with him."

Avenil, who came at short intervals, went away each time more depressed. "Never before was I disposed to believe in a broken heart," he said. "Yet I can find nothing else to account for his state."

The doctor agreed with Avenil, but said that Carol's was a constitution of which the heart was the basis. To injure him in the emotional region was to strike at his most vital part. With him it was as if the body were but a function of the mind, not the mind of the body.

"Bertie, dear," said Zöe one day, "my father tells us that he wants nothing but to be at rest. Does he say the same to you? Is there anything that could be done to bring him comfort?"

"I hate to bring a pang to your dear heart," replied the old man. "If you will know, there is one thing that preys upon him, but he shrinks from obtaining comfort at your cost."

"My cost! What is my cost to his happiness?"

"He says he would die in peace if he only could see you worthily wedded first."

Her lip, ordinarily so indicative of sweetness, curled with scorn.

"I worthily wedded! Bertie, have either you, he, or I lost our memories?" and sinking into a sofa, she murmered, "I worthily wedded! I worthily wedded!"

"Bertie!" she said, springing up again, "has my father fixed upon any 'worthy' man to be the victim?"

Catching his eye, she again exclaimed,—

"I see your—his meaning. No,—Lawrence Wilmer is too good a man for such a fate. Happily he has no such thought of me. He is a model of a brother, and I hope to retain him as one."

"My dear Zöe," replied Bertie, "there is no respect in which you show yourself to be your father's own child more than in your throwing your life away in remorse for the faults of others. Now, without being in Lawrence's confidence or secrets, I read him very differently from you. My impression is that he is longing to win your love, but fears by betraying his feeling to repel you from him, and so lose altogether the delight of your society."

While listening to this speech her color changed rapidly, she sank down upon the sofa, and gasped as for breath. Presently recovering herself she said, speaking more quietly than before,—

"I think you must be mistaken about Mr. Wilmer's sentiments. I am sure he looks upon me only as a sister, and that a somewhat fallen one, whose due is compassion rather than love."

She said this with a formality which, as Bertie perceived, cost her an effort.

"Then at least the idea of his caring for you is not disagreeable to you?" said the old man, hazarding a bold stroke in order to surprise her out of her secret, if she had one.

Zöe was silent. She could not contradict him, and she would not speak untruly.

"My darling child, this will make your father intensely happy. May I tell him?"

"Your imagination is outrunning your facts, at least with one of the parties concerned," she replied, somewhat saucily, it appeared to Bertie; but he saw that her eyes were brimming over with tears, and that she spoke under an effort to check them.

"I promise not to betray you, in case I am wrong about Lawrence."

"Oh, Bertie dear, you know my history. I feel as if I had no right to let myself love anyone, and still less to accept love."

"Well, I don't see it in that light myself, and I doubt whether anybody else does; but that is all better said to your father, or to—— to——"

She stopped the rest by a kiss, and made him promise again not to betray her.

Finding the invalid somewhat revived the day following this conversation, Bertie took occasion to speak of me, remarking casually that he could quite understand that the presence of one so entirely devoted and trustworthy, must be a vast solace.

I shall not repeat the gratifying things said by Carol in answer, though they will ever be treasured by me as a precious testimonial. But Bertie went on to say that what he could not understand was, any young man being so much with Zöe without falling utterly in love with her. Now it seemed, to him, he said, that nothing could be more fitting than that I should become a son to him in reality as I was in affection and conduct.

"Perhaps," said Carol, "he thinks he would have no chance, and withholds himself from speech through fear of offending her."

"I see the awkwardness of the situation," returned Bertie; "but young men are too apt to let their diffidence interfere with the happiness, not of themselves only, but of those who trust to them to take the initiative. It seems to me so natural

and probable that a girl should be attracted by a man of his stamp, to say nothing of his family associations with you, that I only wonder that on her part Zöe is not as much in love with him as he ought to be with her."

Cunning old Bertie! Falling, unsuspecting, into the trap, Carol exclaimed,—

"Oh, that she were! There would then be happiness all round."

"Yes, if he cared likewise for her."

"But he does! he does! We have often spoken of it together. She, however, seems bent on remaining unwed. I can quite appreciate her feeling," he added; "she feels herself humiliated by what has already occurred to her, and shrinks from again loving, or allowing herself to be loved. She is not as the great majority of girls are now-a-days."

"She comes of a proud stock, I know," remarked Bertie drily.

Carol looked at him inquiringly.

"I mean," he continued, "that she inherits a tendency to feel as much mortified when she has made a mistake, as if she had forfeited a recognized claim to infallibility. Now, I consider it true humility, when one has failed in anything, not to brood over the failure—life may be better employed—but to try again until one succeeds. One does that in learning a new game of amusement. How much more in the game of life!"

"Would to heaven she would try again, if only for this once. Zöe united to Lawrence, my last wish would be gratified."

"Tell him to ask her."

"You think she will consent?"

"I say nothing positively; but I am following my observations. Even supposing she cares much for him, the ease with which he contrives to conceal his feeling for her, in time may come to disgust her. A woman is very apt to distrust a love that can so effectually hide itself. Further delay may ruin his chance altogether."

"My ever wise Bertie, pray how came you to know so much about women?"

At my next interview with Carol, he spoke of his wish to see us united, and said that he almost thought it better that I should strain a point and ask Zöe, than delay too long. "You might even," he said, "do it under the appearance of consulting her, as on a matter in which both your feelings and mine were enlisted, but in which nevertheless we were anxious to defer to her wishes."

He was too ill and exhausted for me to think of following his advice that day. The weather was intensely hot and still. Longing for the cool upper airs in which he had been wont to take delight, he had given directions to have a balloon constructed, on the old gaseous system, but with all the modern improvements. It was to be kept captive by a line attached to a windlass in the garden, so that he might ascend and be drawn back at will. Avenil himself superintended the construction. The sick man's eagerness to have it finished, struck me as a hopeful sign, but Avenil and the doctor shook their heads. It was made of a material warranted to restrain the gas for an indefinite period from fulfilling its longings to mix with the atmosphere; and Carol struck us as almost whimsical in his determination to fit it with a variety of contrivances for which, under the circumstances, we could see no use. In these he was assisted by Bertie, who regarded the whole affair as an elaborate toy, but nevertheless gave his aid gladly for the sake of his sick friend.

On the first ascent he lay out so many hours under the stars, having mounted in the afternoon, that we were somewhat uneasy at his failing to give the expected signal for being drawn down. However, when at length he returned to us, he was so cheerful and invigorated that we entertained hopes that the balloon was to prove the best of doctors. This was on the day after he had suggested my making my appeal to Zöe.

On retiring to rest he said to his daughter:

"I had a strange longing, Zöe, when lying up yonder, to cut my tether and soar away never to return. I think it was only the idea of leaving you alone and unprotected that restrained me. Would it, darling, be such a very great sacrifice for you to make to my comfort, to marry Lawrence?"

I was at the furthest end of the room, and observed only that they were conversing in a low tone.

"I fear, my father," she replied, in a faltering voice, and looking very much abashed, "I fear that it would be too great a sacrifice to ask of—him."

"So that if he were ready to make it, you would not object?"

"For your sake, my father, I would not be out-done in generosity."

A lurking smile revealed all to him. Kissing her fair broad brow, he said:

"Then, should Lawrence likewise not deem it too great a sacrifice, and say as much to you, you will not take offence? I should miss him greatly were he compelled to quit us. A repulse from you would be a sentence of banishment. Perhaps he had better keep silence, at least until I am gone?"

"Nay, if he has aught upon his mind, I should prefer that he speak. Whatever the issue, we could still live together as —as we have done. I should not think so very much the worse of him, as to require his dismissal."

So they parted, Carol once more calling out to me his good-night as he left the room.

I rarely lingered after his retirement, and now was undecided whether to say to Zöe that which was uppermost in my thoughts. What served most to restrain me was the reflection that it might appear selfish to speak to her of myself and my wishes while he was so ill.

Looking up from the book over which, while thus pondering, I had been bending, I found Zöe standing before me, regarding me steadfastly with her dark, lustrous eyes.

For a moment neither of us spoke. Then she said:

"What is it you have been reading, Lawrence?"

It was a book of dramas, of the Victorian period. One passage had especially struck me, though occurring in a play which was disfigured and spoilt by false history and gross prejudices. I had been wishing to read it to Carol, but refrained through fear of recalling evil memories.

"Sit down here, Zöe, and look at this," I said, making a place for her beside me. "See how a poet of many generations ago wrote as if he discerned the relation between color and constitution. In this play of *Charles I*, the unfortunate king is made to say to his treacherous favorite:

> "'I saw a picture once by a great master;
> 'Twas an old man's head.
> Narrow and evil was its wrinkled brow;
> Eyes close and cunning; a dull vulpine smile;
> 'Twas called a JUDAS. Wide that artist err'd.
> Judas had eyes like thine, of candid blue;
> His skin was soft; his hair of stainless gold;
> Upon his brow shone the white stamp of truth;
> And lips like thine did give the traitor-kiss.'

"Is it not a full-length picture of your stepmother; that is, supposing the fairness to have been of her white, bloodless hue?"

"Aye, and still more so of —— Oh, Lawrence, how could you remind me of him?"

"My darling Zöe!" I exclaimed, thunderstruck at my heedlessness. "I would not have pained you for the world. I thought only of the sister. You know I have never seen George Bliss. To me he is but a phantom, though a phantom whom to secure your happiness I would pursue to the world's end, until I had driven him beyond the flaming bounds of space; aye, and will, Zöe, if you will tell me that by inflicting such vengeance upon him, I can ease your heart of but the smallest pang."

"You would do so much for me, Lawrence? My father was wondering just now which of us would make the greatest sacrifice for him."

"Well, Zöe, I am ready to enter the lists with you. What is to be the nature of the competition?"

"I like what you said of George Bliss just now. It is a relief to me to think that you regard him only as a phantom. It will help me to banish my evil memories."

"Tell me, Zöe, do you mean that you really have been

allowing the past to influence the disposition of your plans, and—and affections for the future?"

"In what way do you mean, Lawrence?"

"For instance, is it on that account that you have withdrawn yourself from Society, and become to all intents and purposes a nun, holding yourself in so that no man, not even I, who almost live with you, would venture to speak to you of love—no matter how mighty the impulse—for fear of grieving and offending you?"

"Yes, Lawrence, it is so."

"And why, pray?"

"Because I am a woman, and have a woman's instincts."

"Then hear me, Zöe," I said, placing my hand upon hers. "It is because you are a woman and have a woman's instincts, that you are absolved from all shadow of blame for the past, and therefore from all cause for unhappiness in the future. It is because you are a woman and have a woman's instincts, that you are capable of putting love before prudence, and lavishing all the wealth of your nature upon that which is unworthy of you. And, further, it is because you are a woman and have a woman's instincts, even to this extent of not despising wholly that which is not wholly worthy your regard, that I presume to tell you that I love you, and to ask you whether I may hope you will ever consent to bless my life with the gift of the only woman I have ever loved or longed for."

She seemed very much surprised, and said:

"How long have you felt thus toward me?"

The little book of my winter in Iceland was lying on the table before us. Opening it at the verse beginning,—

> "Why haunt me when I know thou dost not love me?"

I told her that it began with the first sight of her, and had grown ever since, the more I saw her, until it had become an indispensable portion of my being.

"Oh, Lawrence, Lawrence, how happy this will make my father!" And her head bent forward until it rested on the hand in which I was still holding hers.

"Why, he has known of it all along."

"I don't understand. Known of what?"

"Of my love for you. That was not wanting to make his happiness."

"My dear, dull Lawrence!"

"You love me, then! That must be your meaning. Sweetest Zöe, how could you torment me so long?"

"Can you not divine? I thought you had read me thoroughly. Listen, Lawrence: if I did not love you, I wished, oh, so earnestly, that it were lawful for me to do so. But I dared not let myself love an honorable and true man, or to let him love me. Spare my speaking. Can you, will you not see that I—I—felt you were worthy to have all the freshness of my heart and soul and body, and that I could only offer you the soiled, unworthy creature that I am!"

When ecstasy had subsided sufficiently to allow of conversation, I said,

"My own precious Zöe, what a thing it is to have a higher law than that of the Conventional! Here is your dear father killing himself for the lapse of another from an ideal that other does not recognize; and his daughter destroying her happiness and mine, to say nothing of her father's, because she was not endowed with an infallibility that made her superior to the arts of villains! Really, Zöe darling, such vanity needed such correction. Let us believe the discipline has been purposely provided for you. And now let me kiss away those tears, and we will go and tell your, nay, our father, that we have agreed that no sacrifice is too great to be made to his happiness, and are prepared for his sake to put up with each other!"

"Dear Lawrence, I love to be bantered by you. It proves your confidence in the reality of our affection. But you too, you know, have not been exempt from submission to a higher law than that of the Conventional. The Conventional bids us be truthful and honest under all circumstances. And you practised concealment and deceit to save your mother from pain. And you have never before told me you loved me!"

* * * * * * *

A gentle tap at his chamber door elicited permission to enter. Carol had not gone to his bed, but was reclining, wrapped in a dressing gown, beside the open window, gazing at the starry heavens. Our unwonted appearance at such an hour, and linked hand in hand, told him all.

"I can have no delay," he said, "for I know not how soon I may be called away. I have been listening to the sweet voices up yonder, and they have come nearer to-night than ever before. This only was needed to enable me to depart in perfect peace. To-morrow, Zöe,—nay, I will not be so precipitate,—the day after, you will give me the right to call Lawrence my son?"

Presently he continued,—

"That Egyptian business has made nearly as great inroads upon my fortune as upon my health. One cannot keep so many millions of people for a twelvemonth upon nothing, you know. But there is enough left to make the wheels of life go smoothly. Don't go home to-night, Lawrence. Let me feel that you are, as my son should be, when he has a sick father, in the room adjoining mine. Yonder is Bertie's wire. Signal to him not to expect you back to-night, and the cause. He will rejoice even as one of ourselves."

CHAPTER XI.

"So long as ye both do live, or love?" asked the lawyer, as he took from his bag a number of forms of marriage-contracts for us to make a selection from.

"Charms or chains?" said Bertie, gaily, putting the query into other words.

"Remember that the former are very liable to be galled by the latter," observed Lord Avenil;—for all our chief friends were present to congratulate us and witness our union.

"It is quite true," said Mistress Susanna, with a significant

look, "that people are apt to be kept on their good behavior by the knowledge that a separation is easy."

"But it is not infallible, as I know to my—gain," said Bessie, evidently on a second thought substituting the word *gain* for *cost*. She was always a favorite of Carol's, and more than ever since, in obedience to her heart, she had vanquished her pride, and returned to her husband.

"With whom does the decision rest?" I asked of the lawyer.

He said that it is a matter of arrangement between the parties, the lady, if under age, generally being represented by her parents.

"My daughter and I waive all voice in the matter," said Carol from his couch, "and leave it entirely to you, Lawrence. We have agreed to accept your decision, whatever it be."

This put me in a position of considerable embarrassment. A marriage of the first class is soluble only for unfaithfulness, or some tremendous fault equally impossible of contemplation by one placed as I was, and this accompanied by all the horrors of a public investigation. On the other hand, the advantages of fortune and position were all on the side of the lady. In claiming such a marriage, I should be appropriating a life-interest in her fortune. I asked the lawyer to repeat his interrogation.

"So long as ye both do live, or love?"

"I may be very stupid," I said, "but I fail to see the distinction. Do you see it, Zöe?"

She left her father's side, where she had been sitting with her hand in his, and came and kissed me on the forehead.

"Thank you, Lawrence," she said. "I may truly declare that my life shall end with my love. I cannot survive a second failure."

"My dear Zöe! I did not mean a bit what you mean. I meant that my love would only end with my life."

She did not kiss me this time, but sat down by me, and held my hand in hers. It seemed wonderful to me, now that I knew the magnetism of her caress, to think that I had been so long and so much in her society without learning it before. The

readiness with which her nature opened to the sunshine of affection, showed how severe was the frost by which it had hitherto been closed.

At length, I said that my difficulty in coming to a decision depended, not on any positive sentiment of mine, but on the peculiarity of our respective positions. All the material advantages being on the other side, I did not consider myself entitled to consult my own feelings and wishes as I should do were I in a thoroughly independent position.

"I anticipated the dilemma," said my dear Zöe's father, "and have endeavored to provide against it. This, Lawrence, is a deed of gift by which I settle on you a fortune sufficient to justify you in deciding according both to your judgment and your heart. Mark only that we do not seek to influence your determination, but shall love and respect you truly whatever it be. So far from that, the fortune is yours whether you wed Zöe or not."

Somehow, my circulation seemed to have become deranged. My head was feeling dizzy, and my heart had taken to thumping against my side in a manner that I thought must have been audible all over the room. And, what was yet more curious, it seemed to me to beat in rhythmical time with the words,—

"Let your heart speak, Lawrence Wilmer!"
"Let your heart speak, Lawrence Wilmer!"

More for the purpose of gaining time to collect myself, than for any other cause, I asked the lawyer to repeat his interrogation once again.

"So long as ye both do live, or love?"

"For life!" I exclaimed, with a vehemence I was unable to control or to account for. "For life, or not at all!"

The cause of my perturbation has since become apparent to me. The contact of Zöe's hand, backed as it was by the intense desire of the whole abundant vitality of her nature, had completely magnetized me. It was the impulse of her blood

that was circulating through my veins, her heart that was throbbing in my breast, and her wish that made in my mind the rhythm,—

"Let your heart speak, Lawrence Wilmer!"

She herself, however, was quite unconscious of the effect she was producing upon me, though she admitted that she felt while then sitting beside me as if her being was in some mysterious way identified with mine.

There was no mistaking the satisfaction with which my decision, and the heartiness with which I had enunciated it, were regarded.

"My son, in very truth!" exclaimed Carol, first embracing me, and then joining my hand to that of his daughter. Even Susanna indicated her approbation, by admitting that no rule is without its exception, and remarking,—"Our Zöe's character is one that requires the constant presence and support of a husband. Indeed, she will have nothing else to occupy her." And the lawyer proceeded to select from his bundle a form of the first-class, for the signature of ourselves and witnesses.

The one drawback to our gladness was the illness of our dear father,—for so I shall now call him. And here it occurs to me that some of my readers may be at a loss to account for the change made sometime back in my manner of styling him, namely, when, for the familiar and affectionate *Criss*, I substituted the formal surname. This is the explanation. During the period prior to my intimacy with him, I knew him only through the medium of those whom a life-long and affectionate friendship justified in using the familiar and endearing abbreviation. Seeing him with their eyes, and hearing him with their ears, he naturally was for me the *Criss* he was for them. But when I came upon the scene and knew him for myself, I did not deem it meet to adopt the same familiar tone. If nothing else, the difference between our ages and positions made it unseemly for me to do so. Thus it is that from *Criss*

he became in my narrative *Carol*, or *Christmas Carol*. I could not bring myself to use his conventional title of honor, shrinking as he himself did from it. And now that he has become my father, all other names are merged in that one cherished appellation.

Whether owing to his entering upon a new phase in his disease, or to a resolution to lessen our anxiety on his account during this first period of our union, he certainly manifested such an increase of vigor and cheerfulness as to fill us with hopes for the best. He insisted on my taking Zöe a short tour, and introducing her anew as my wife to the circle at the Triangle, Bertie the while occupying our place by his side. The season continued to be oppressively hot and calm; but the device of the captive balloon ministered vastly to his relief. He made Bertie also ascend with him, and read his correspondence to him in it. His best hours were those thus spent aloft, and it was there he obtained his most invigorating slumber.

Our hopes were renewed but to be disappointed. We had not long returned, when a rapid change for the worse set in. He was fully aware of its significance, and told the doctor he should not trouble him much longer. He conversed much with me in a tone that, though low and weak, was full of gladness. He told me of all his plans for the good of mankind, and spoke much of Africa as of a country whose welfare was especially dear to him, notwithstanding the fatal return he had reaped from it. "I suppose you know," he added, "that my cousin the Emperor, having no heir, is the last of his line. Happily, the result of his reign has been to enable his people to dispense with the monarchy, by fitting them for the higher condition of self-government. However, should they at any time need a sovereign, the old royal blood will still exist in a son of Zöe's. Not that I think you would be wise to remind them, or to avail yourself, of the fact. Successions and restorations, founded upon an ancient prestige, have invariably proved a curse to all

concerned. The world must live its own life." With regard to the Emperor himself, he charged me to do whatever might be in my power to lessen the remorse he might feel at having contributed to his death; though he admitted, on the other hand, that it might be useful for the people of Soudan to know the truth. Thus might his death, he said, be of more avail than his life. Some causes never prosper until they have had their martyr.

"Such reflection will bring but poor comfort to us," I said, scarcely able to speak for the fullness of my heart; "though history fully bears it out, even that of Him whom of all men you have ever most loved and cherished. It must be an additional embitterment," I continued, "to know that one's end has been compassed by the treachery of a chosen friend. Yet, even the least fallible of human hearts was forced to admit the existence of a 'son of perdition,' redeemable by no love, and to lament over his failure to save him."

"I suppose it ought to comfort me," he returned, "to think that, whereas He met with one, the traitors to me have been but two. That, however, is not the thought from which my comfort comes. I am unable to recognize any as a child of perdition. It is not given to me to fathom all moral mysteries, but I see enough to enable me to trust, and that not faintly, the larger, nay, the largest hope—the hope that at last, far off it may be, yet at last to all, good will be the final goal——"

I recognized the quotation he was too weak to finish.

Recovering a little, he continued,—

"After I am gone tell this to the Emperor, my cousin, with my love and pardon. Tell it, too, to her from whom I was compelled to separate. It is not the good who are to me a proof of the hereafter, but the bad. And that, not for their chastisement, but for their amendment: that is, their development, the development in them of the moral sense—that divine spark, of whose marvellous vitality we have before spoken—a development necessary, one would suppose, for His own satisfaction, as well as for their benefit. That is, if like man, He hates leaving any portion of his work unfinished."

Zöe and I sat much by his couch watching the face with the divine eyes closed, and often detecting no appearance of breathing; but there was ever over all the smile of intense peace.

More than once we thought him gone, when he returned to consciousness with ideas which seemed freshly gathered from the communion of saints. Once we thought he was wandering in mind, for we discerned amid his murmurings words that seemed to us utterly irrelevant. But presently his wan face lit up joyously, and he exclaimed in a voice of more than his wonted power,—

"Yes! yes! It is indeed encouraging. To what may not life come, when we see the progress it has already made!" An utterance to which Avenil afterwards supplied the clue, as well as its relation to the words which had struck us as so irrelevant. Those words were *Aquarium* and *Zoölogical.* His mind was running upon a conversation he had held with Avenil on a recent visit to the institutions indicated, a conversation in which they had made the objects before them the text of a discussion on their respective theories of existence and evolution.

The subject had evidently taken great hold of him; and it was with no little interest that Zöe and I continued to listen to the workings of his mind in relation to it, as he continued his colloquy with the Invisible.

"All is is clear now; even the Justice that was so dark and inscrutable. I see now that the Universe is thy first thought, and not the mere translation into fact of a thought already conceived, and that in some way mysterious to us, Thou thyself livest therein. But thou seemedst to me sometimes to think too slowly. I wanted heaven to be reached at a single bound. Impatient myself, I rebelled against thy patience. I could not bear that men should themselves build the ladder by which they must rise, toilsome round by round. Oh, how I rejoice in my conviction of thy inexorable justice, for therein alone lies safety for all. Out upon those who would divorce it from mercy, and thrust themselves between. Thy justice and

thy mercy are one and the same. Oh, men my brothers, what have ye not suffered through that divorce! The justice that could swerve to one side could swerve also to the other. But trusting the justice, ye cannot but trust the maker of the conditions to be content with the products; seeing that it would be injustice to make the products disproportionate to the conditions. If the conditions have a right to exist, the products have a like right. The poor soil and the arid sky are as much a part of the universal order as the rich garden, soft rain, and warm sunshine. It is just that one should yield a crop which the other would despise. It would be unjust were both to yield alike. It is only from those to whom much is given that much is required. The worm! the worm is one of the conditions; yes, Amelia, even the worm that eats out the heart! Nannie, darling! are you listening? and do you comprehend? See! you have taught me something."

Speaking thus, he suddenly raised himself and looked around with a bewildered air. The sight of Zöe and me recalled him to the present, and he said,—

"You believe, Lawrence, that the good will ultimately prevail. You must revise your belief, for it is wrong. The good is always prevailing, though we may perceive it not. Ponder this and you will learn that, from the very nature and definition of good, it cannot be otherwise. For by good we mean that which assimilates and harmonizes to the greatest extent its surrounding conditions: that which works in truest sympathy with the essential nature of the rest. That is evil which by its very selfishness arraigns the rest against it. Good needs no power working from without to make it triumphant. It triumphs by winning the sympathies of all to work with it."

For some time he remained unconscious to all around, and murmuring words that were hard to understand, though the voice was not the voice of grief. After a while, either through their becoming clearer, or our ears being better trained, we learnt to comprehend their import. While occupied one day in listening to them, Bertie being with us, Avenil appeared at the door, asking mutely if he might enter. Beckoning him to tread softly over the carpet, he approached noiselessly and

joined the group. The murmuring was going on, though so faintly as to require close listening if we would catch its meaning.

Avenil bent down and listened.

"There is music and rhythm," he whispered. "It is more singing than talking. What can it be that he sings at such a moment? Methought I caught the words. 'Heaven the reflex of earth.'"

He was answered by Zöe, unconsciously using the words of her father's favorite poet:

"He sings of what the world will be when the years have died away!"

"He leaves the world as he entered it: a Christmas Carol to the last," said Bertie.

After a while his eyes opened, and brightened as they rested on Avenil.

"Master Charles, dear," he said, using his old boyish phrase for him, "I was wishing for you. I want you to take Zöe and Lawrence back to the Triangle with you to-night. Do not speak, please, but gratify me," he added, turning his eyes to us. "I want this night the repose of absolute solitude—solitude, that is, so far as this world and its affections are concerned. I wish to be alone with—" and here his voice became inaudible.

He was evidently bent upon it, and with heavy hearts we obeyed him, first impressing our kisses on his brow. Bertie was the last to leave him, even as he had been the first to receive him. We intended, however, to return very early next day.

In the morning we were aroused by a messenger bearing a letter from Bertie. It said, "He is gone; gone as he himself wished to go. I remained with him a while after your departure. He appeared to rally, and asked me to help him to walk across the garden to the balloon. The effort of making those few steps exhausted his strength. On reaching the balloon he was forced to lie down in the car. After a little while, it being quite dark, he asked me to light a signal lamp, the pale green one, containing Avenil's famous composition. Its

brilliant light seemed to inspirit him, for he declared he would go aloft, and have his sleep there. 'I think, dear Bertie,' he said, 'that I should die happier, if that were possible, did I know that I should for ever remain aloft in the land of dreams. Should, by any chance, the balloon escape with me, and bear my body upwards, do not send in search of it. Let it be, so long as the elements suffer it. A wild fancy you will think this, Bertie, but it is my fancy. Now kiss me, Bertie, and set the windlass free. Tell the servants to await my signal for hauling me in; or if that does not come—and it may not, you know (he smiled significantly as he said this)—they may let me be till morning, unless the wind comes on to blow strongly.'

"As he finished speaking, he composed himself on the little couch in the balloon, in the attitude of one of the recumbent monumental figures in the ancient cathedrals, his face illuminated by the signal lamp, already looking like the face of the peaceful dead. I lingered, not liking to let him go where he would be alone and far from help; but he cried to me, 'Now! Bertie, now I am ready. Let me rise!' and so with reluctant hand I pressed the spring of the windlass, and suffered the balloon slowly to ascend. The night was intensely still. 'Perhaps,' I said to myself 'the airs aloft will revive him once more, according to their wont, and the morning will bring him back better.'

"Alas, dear friends, I have to tell you that the morning failed to bring him back at all.

"I had gone into the house to lie down just as I was, keeping my face upturned to the window whence I could see the light of his signal lamp. I am old, and I was weary and heavy with sadness, and I suppose I dropped asleep. But on waking I could no longer see the light. Calling one of his attendants, I enquired whether he could see it, for it might be that there was a mist either in the air or in my eyes. He said that either it must have gone out, or else the balloon had escaped.

"Hastening into the garden, I stumbled over what proved to be a coil of rope. The man reached the windlass, and cried that it was indeed so, the balloon had broken loose, and his master was lost.

"At my bidding he brought a light, and we searched for the rope, over which I had stumbled. It was indeed the line by which the balloon had been attached to the windlass, and which now lay with its vast length in coils about the lawn. I examined the end, to ascertain whether the escape had been intended or accidental. There was no breakage: it had been regularly detached from its fastenings. I remembered then that the attachment had been made by an ingenious contrivance, which, while it was impossible to become loosened of itself, was yet capable of detachment by a slight pull.

"Dear ones, with whom I mourn as for a son prematurely taken from me, though this be so, there is no need to suppose that our beloved one hastened his own end. His latest words show that he contemplated the probability of his not surviving until morning: also that he coveted to take his rest in the clear upper airs rather than on the murky earth. I am convinced that, feeling his dying struggle upon him, he, in a final convulsion, withdrew the attaching bolt, and soared upwards, body and soul together. The vessel which bears him, a very ship of heaven, will never come down again; at least, not in the days of any now dwelling upon earth. Nay, such is its extraordinary buoyancy—he would have it so, to steady it in the wind, while yet a captive—that, on being released, it must at once have shot far up into those rare strata of airs whither no living person can follow it, for death would overcome them long before they could reach the altitude where alone it will find its balance and fixed height.

"Let us, then, think of him we loved, not as mouldering in the damp earth, but as riding, even in death free and joyous, upon the blasts he so loved to surmount in life, and sleeping the sleep of the righteous, or mingling with the pure spirits of his living dreams."

* * * * *

"Oh, Lawrence, Lawrence, can it really be that we shall see him no more? that he can never again come down to us? May not the fresh airs aloft revive him, as they so oft have done? Ah, I see you have no hope, and that I must be resigned. But, oh, what a sense of perpetual unrest it gives me to think of him

lying out upon the breezes, subject to no conditions of regular motion or speed, but evermore a sport to the most capricious of elements. I have been longing for night that we might sweep the heavens for his pale green star. It is so calm that it may yet be within range of the great Reflector in the Observatory. Come up and search with me."

"Let us not call the element he loved so well capricious, my Zöe," I replied, as we ascended to the astronomical tower of the Triangle. "None better than he comprehended the secret of its impulses. The perfect sympathy subsisting between the atmosphere and the sun; its responsiveness to every varying thrill that expresses itself to us in heat, color, magnetism, light, was for him the most significant symbol of the dependence of the individual upon the universal soul. Born in a balloon, I verily believe that by his own choice, though the action of some divine instinct, he is also buried in a balloon. Buried, as Bertie well says, not to moulder in damp dark earth, but far above the corroding influences of our lower atmosphere; far above the lightning-ranges; far above the breezes such as we know them; even in those blue depths of air whence he was wont in life to seek his inspirations. Let us rather envy him his Euthanasia!"

"Ah, and if I thought that *they* would still visit him, and whisper to him of the Above, I should rejoice and no longer think of him as lonely. Believe you it can be so?"

"Dearest, we cannot better honor his teaching than by emulating his trustfulness. Do you remember his saying that, as perfect love casts out fear, so perfect knowledge would leave no space for hope? Zöe, let us cherish hope."

CHAPTER XII.

The time that has elapsed since I commenced my labor of love, has been far longer than I anticipated. I hoped also to

have given a much fuller account, and to have told it in fewer words. My principal difficulty has been to make a selection from the mass of materials which have flowed in upon me from all quarters,—materials of which each item is a separate testimonial to the excellencies I undertook to exhibit.

For one reason in particular I rejoice that my work is finished, however imperfect and inadequate it be. It is a reason which would have had his eager sympathy had he lived. Already are the semi-civilized populations of Africa regarding him as more than man, and seeking a place to assign to him in their ecclesiastical calendars; not seeing, in their superstitious folly, that to claim for him a rank of that above humanity is to detract from his merits as a man. He himself would be the first to declare, could he have foreseen the occasion, that his sole miracle-workers were Heart, Brain, and Circumstance. "Love me, if ye will. Follow me, if ye can, in that which I have done well. But worship only the Supreme."

If this memoir achieve no other end than to show the peoples who seek thus to honor him, that they are thereby doing him dishonor, and not him only, but the Creation in which he was a factor, I shall deem myself fully repaid. For I shall have done that which he would desire to have done, and done it in the spirit he would approve.

I trust that it will fulfil this end, and yet another also; and that the example here set forth will incite many to whom these days of vast accumulated wealth and enormous scientific appliance have given the power, like him to—

> "Fly, discaged, to sweep,
> In ever-highering eagle-circles, up
> To the great Sun of glory, and thence swoop
> Down upon all things base, and dash them dead;"

as sang his favorite poet of the Victorian era, of one who might well have passed for his prototype.

And for those, too, who are neither wealthy nor learned, may he, without being summoned from his chosen rest in the deeps of air, prove ever nigh in their hearts and minds as a controlling ideal of their aspirations.

In his divine simplicity and comprehension, the man himself was far greater than aught that he said or did, or than can be said of him. Of his principal achievement, I will only add that the ocean-stream, whose first rush into the Sahara we witnessed together, is now a steady and equable current, just strong enough to replace the loss by evaporation of the warm and shallow sea which occupies the place of the desert up to the very borders of the plateau of Soudan. Already has this new creation proved beneficial to the climate of the surrounding regions. Clouds heavy with moisture now fling their grateful shadows, and freely pour their abundance on the once accursed plains. And no longer do the toilsome paths of the sandy desert whiten beneath the bones of its travellers, but above them speed the swift electric ships and gladsome sails.

The moral victory is greater even than the physical. Jerusalem has avowed her share in the Emperor's deed, and is not ashamed to make amends. Avenil deemed it due to his friend's memory, and to international justice, to bring the complicity of the Jews before the Council of Federated Nations. The offence was held a serious one, for it was committed by one member of the Federation against another member. That the exasperation of Egypt has been allayed without exacting exemplary retribution, is due solely to the memory of him who sacrificed himself to avert her destruction. It is as a tribute to that memory that Egypt has consented to bury in oblivion her ancient feud with Israel, and to grasp in amity the hand of Ethiopia.

May it be that by the life and death of Christmas Carol, more than one *Eastern Question* will be advanced towards its final solution!"

THE END.